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# The Financial Burden of Substance Abuse in West Virginia:

## The Parole Board



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*West Virginia's Governor-Appointed Substance Abuse  
Prevention & Intervention Planning Body*

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**Staff to the WV Partnership &  
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## INTRODUCTION

The economic impact of drugs and alcohol to any society is astronomical. In West Virginia, not only is this cost high, it has increased significantly. This is the third in a series of several reports that attempt to estimate the cost of drugs and alcohol to various institutions in West Virginia's criminal justice system. The West Virginia criminal justice system includes the Regional Jail Authority, Division of Corrections, Parole Board, Prosecuting Attorneys Institute, Public Defender Program, Law Enforcement, the judicial system, and Division of Juvenile Services. This report will estimate the percentage of the clients served by the West Virginia Parole Board who were incarcerated for drug- and alcohol-involved crimes from fiscal year (FY) 2005 to fiscal year 2008; this population includes WV parolees, and Out-of-State parolees and probationers (WV Division of Corrections, 2008). This report will also estimate the costs of drug and alcohol crimes to the Parole Board from FY 2005 to FY 2008, as well as the sources of these funds for each year.

The West Virginia Parole Board plays an important role in West Virginia's criminal justice system. It makes independent, quality, conditional releases of adult offenders (West Virginia Parole Board, 2005). It also makes clemency recommendations to the Governor for adult offenders. In addition, the Parole Board works to facilitate the timely integration of offenders back into society as law-abiding citizens (West Virginia Parole Board, 2005).

## Cost of Drug- and Alcohol-involved Crimes in the Parole Board

The average number of clients under the supervision of West Virginia Parole Board in FY 2008 was 2415; this was a 27.4% increase from the 1895 clients in 2005 (Division of Corrections, 2005, 2008). The number of clients was broken down by the most serious crime for which the client had been incarcerated. Of the Parole Board's clients in 2008, 27.6% had been incarcerated specifically for drug offenses whereas 4.4% had been incarcerated specifically for alcohol offenses (WV Division of Corrections, 2008).

Apart from the crimes that were directly attributable to drugs and alcohol, drugs and alcohol are indirectly associated with several other crimes. Using the 1996 Survey of Inmates in Local Jails and the 1995 Survey of Adults on Probation, Miller, Levy, Cohen, and Cox (2006) estimated the percentage of other crimes that are indirectly drug- and alcohol-involved. They defined a crime as being indirectly drug-involved if an inmate reported being under the influence of drugs or if the inmate committed the crime to pay for drugs. Further, they defined a crime as being indirectly alcohol-involved if an inmate reported consuming at least one drink of alcohol shortly before the offense was committed.

Unlike the Division of Correction (DOC) data presented in the preceding report, the crimes committed by the Parole Board's clients were not broken down into the level of detail needed to apply Miller et al.'s (2006) methodology to obtain the proportion of the Parole Board's clients who had committed crimes that were indirectly drug- and alcohol-involved. For example, all sex crimes were lumped together. This was also the case for child abuse and several other crimes. Thus, the estimates of indirect drug- and alcohol-involved DOC inmates were used as estimates of indirect drug- and alcohol-involved Probation Board clients. For example, 14.60% of DOC inmates in FY 2008 committed a crime that was indirectly due to drugs. This estimate of indirect drug-involved crime was added to the 27.60% of the Parole Board's clients who had committed offenses that were directly drug-related and suggested that 42.21% of Parole Board's clients had been incarcerated for crimes that were directly or indirectly drug-involved in FY 2008 (Table 1). Table 1 provides the trend of the percentage of crimes directly and indirectly attributable to drugs and alcohol. The percentage of Parole Board's clients that had been incarcerated for drug-involved crimes continued to increase in the four-year period between FY 2005 and FY 2008. For alcohol-involved crimes, the percentage of Parole Board's clients that had

been incarcerated for direct and indirect alcohol-involved crimes declined between FY 2005 and FY 2007. However, a slight increase was recorded in FY 2008.

**Table 1: Percent of Parole Board's Clients that had been Incarcerated for Crimes Directly and Indirectly Attributable to Drugs and Alcohol from FY 2005 to FY 2008**

	Drug				Alcohol			
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2005	2006	2007	2008
Indirect Drug-involved <sup>1</sup>	16.38	16.20	14.16	14.60	23.08	23.02	19.58	19.94
Direct Drug Offenses	22.41	22.41	24.60	27.60	6.54	4.13	4.30	4.40
<b>Overall Drug Offenses</b>	<b>37.79</b>	<b>38.62</b>	<b>38.77</b>	<b>42.21</b>	<b>29.61</b>	<b>27.16</b>	<b>23.88</b>	<b>24.34</b>

In spite of the decline in proportion of crimes that were alcohol-involved, the cost of alcohol to the Parole Board increased in all years apart from FY 2007. Table 2 shows that an estimated \$252,311 of the Parole Board's budget was consumed by alcohol-involved crimes in FY 2008; this was a 37.85% increase from FY 2005. Table 2 also shows that the amount that the Parole Board spent on drug-involved crimes in FY 2008 was nearly double what was spent in 2005 because their overall budget nearly doubled. Approximately \$437,555 of the Parole Board's budget was consumed by drug-involved crimes in FY 2008 compared to approximately \$233,598 in FY 2005. In total, more than half of the Parole Board's budget goes towards crimes attributable to drugs and alcohol.

**Table 2: Estimates of Drugs and Alcohol Cost to the Parole Board from FY 2005 to FY 2008**

YEAR	Total Budget <sup>2</sup>	% Crime due to drugs	Estimated cost of drugs crimes <sup>3</sup>	% Crime due to alcohol	Estimated cost of alcohol crimes <sup>3</sup>	Total cost of drugs and alcohol <sup>3</sup>
2005	\$618,147	37.79	\$233,598	29.61	\$183,033	\$416,631
2006	\$687,063	38.62	\$265,344	27.16	\$186,606	\$451,950
2007	\$705,663	38.77	\$273,586	23.88	\$168,512	\$442,098
2008	\$1,036,611	42.21	\$437,555	24.34	\$252,311	\$689,866

Table 3 presents data on the different sources of funds for the Parole Board's budget. The Parole Board's budget comes totally from the general fund. As such, the state of West Virginia bears all the cost of services provided by the Parole Board for crimes attributable to drugs and alcohol!

<sup>1</sup> These are the percentages of DOC inmates whose crimes were indirectly due to drugs and alcohol in the preceding report. They were used as estimates for the Parole Board's clients because the Parole Board's data was not broken down in sufficient detail.

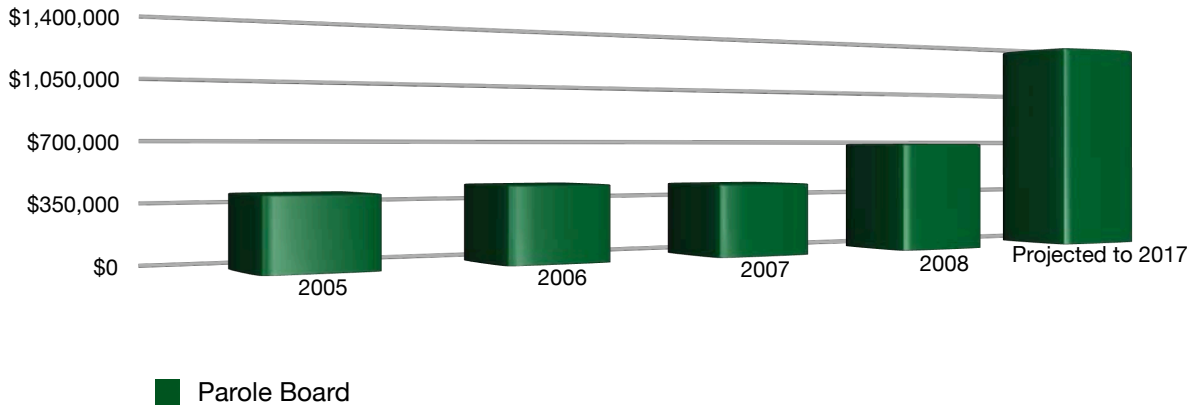
<sup>2</sup> Budget figures were provided by the West Virginia Budget Office

<sup>3</sup> Rounded up to nearest dollar

**Table 3: Cost of Drugs and Alcohol to the Parole Board by Source of Fund**

SOURCE	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Drugs Cost by Source</b>				
General Fund	\$233,598.00	\$265,344.00	\$273,586.00	\$4 37,554
Federal Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Appropriated Special Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Unappropriated special Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$233,598.00</b>	<b>\$265,344.00</b>	<b>\$273,586.00</b>	<b>\$437,554.00</b>
<b>Alcohol Cost by Source</b>				
General fund	\$183,033.00	\$186,606.00	\$168,512.00	\$252,311.00
Federal fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Appropriated Special Fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Unappropriated special fund	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$183,033.00</b>	<b>\$186,606.00</b>	<b>\$168,512.00</b>	<b>\$252,311.00</b>

**Total Cost of Drugs and Alcohol Use: The Parole Board**



<sup>3</sup> Rounded up to nearest dollar

## References

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