

Civil Commitment Admissions and Releases

2012-2013

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During the 24-month period, from January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2013 there were a total of 5,059 civil new court commitments to, and 5,148 releases from, the Massachusetts Department of Correction (MA DOC) facilities. This brief seeks to explore the admission and release trends of the MA DOC for that two-year period.

A civil commitment is defined as the involuntary commitment of an individual via legal means to incarcerate an individual against their will. While there are various reasons for an inmates to be civilly committed, they are generally broken into three groups: Mental Health Commitments, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Commitments (i.e., Section 35's), and those identified as sexual offenders/sexually dangerous.

Male civil commitments are housed at different facilities based on their civil commitment groups: Bridgewater State Hospital (BSH), Massachusetts Alcohol and Substance Abuse Center (MASAC), or The Massachusetts Treatment Center (MTC). BSH houses mental health commitments which include but are not limited to: inmates committed for mental health evaluations, inmates incompetent to stand trial due to mental health reasons, and those unable to await trial or serve a sentence in a penal environment. MASAC houses inmates civilly committed under MGL 123, Section 35 for drug and/or alcohol detoxification and treatment. MTC houses civil commitments identified either as a sexually dangerous person or in need of sexual offender treatment.

All female civil commitments, regardless of type of commitment, are housed at MCI-Framingham (FRA).

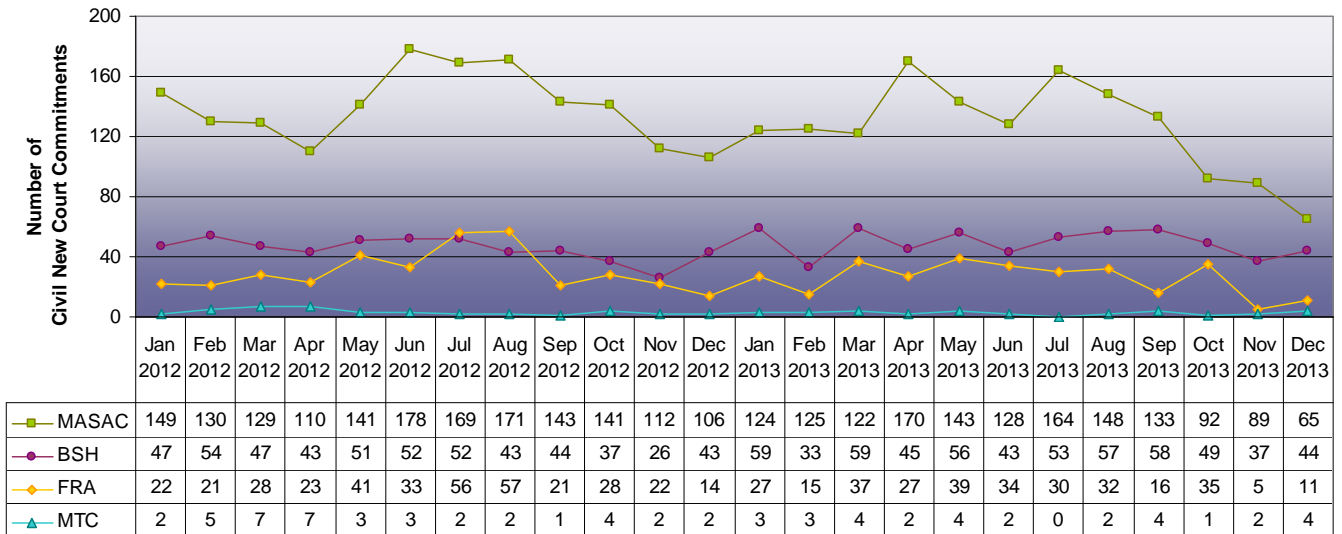
Also included in this brief are civil admissions or releases to the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital (LSH), a temporary holding facility that provides inpatient and outpatient care to both male and female commitments.

CIVIL ADMISSIONS

Graph I shows the monthly counts of civil new court commitments. Over the two-year trend period, there were 5,059 civil new court commitments. The majority, 62.9%, were male Section 35 inmates to the MASAC, followed by mental health commitments admitted to Bridgewater State Hospital (22.4%), female civil commitments (13.3%), and inmates admitted to the Massachusetts Treatment Center (1.4%).

Overall, there was an average of 211 civil new court commitments each month, ranging from a minimum of 124 in December 2013 to a maximum of 279 in July 2012. For MASAC there was an average of 133 admissions each month, with a minimum of 65 in December 2013 and a maximum of 178 in June of 2012. Bridgewater State Hospital had an average of 47 admissions each month, with a minimum of 26 in November 2012 and a maximum of 59 in March of 2013. The MTC had an average of three admissions per month, ranging from none in July 2013 to seven in both March and April of 2012. MCI-Framingham averaged 28 civil commitments a month, with a trend minimum of five in November 2013 to a maximum of 57 in August 2012. There were notable, seasonal, jumps in overall civil admissions during the late spring and early summer of each year.

Graph I: Civil New Court Commitments to MA DOC, January 2012 through December 2013



Over the two-year trend period, there was an overall decrease in civil commitments to the MA DOC; this trend was most notable during the course of 2013. This trend was more driven by Section 35 admissions than mental health or sexually dangerous commitments. As the most common type of civil admission, Section 35 inmates at MASAC followed a trend most similar to the total civil commitment trend with an overall decrease in Section 35 admissions, the greatest occurring during the last half of 2013.

Bridgewater State Hospital saw a slight upward trend in new court commitments over the trend period. Comparatively, 2012 and 2013 saw decreases in admissions over the course of each year. Based on the yearly trends, it may be inferred that the 24-month trend was due to an increased number in admissions 2013 over 2012.

Admissions at the Massachusetts Treatment Center saw a decline during 2012 and 2013. MTC saw an overall increase in admissions over the course of the two-year trend period.

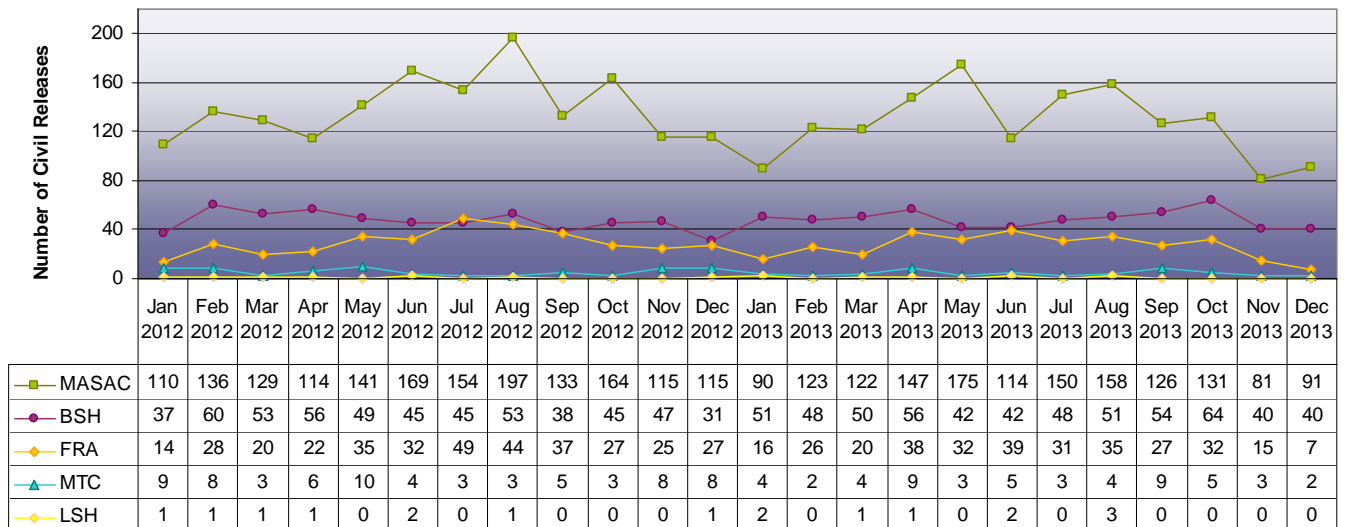
Female civil commitments at MCI-Framingham saw an overall negative trend for the two-year period; both years saw a decrease in admissions, with 2013 having the more notable downward trend.

CIVIL RELEASES

During the same 24-month period, there were a total of 5,148 civil releases from MA DOC facilities as shown in Graph II. The majority (61.9%) were male Section 35 inmates released from MASAC. This was followed by mental health commitment releases from Bridgewater State Hospital (22.2%), and female civil released from MCI-Framingham (13.2%). Civil releases from the MTC made up 2.4% of total civil releases, and 0.3% were released from Lemuel Shattuck Hospital. Similar to admissions, there was a spike during the middle of 2012 for MASAC and MCI-Framingham which was most notable during the months following the seasonal summer spikes.

Overall, there was an average of 215 civil releases each month, ranging from 139 in November 2013 to 298 in August 2012. For MASAC, there was an average of 133 releases each month, with a minimum of 81 in November 2013 and a maximum of 197 in August of 2012. Bridgewater State Hospital had an average of 48 releases each month, with a minimum of 31 in December 2012 and a maximum of 64 in October of 2013. The MTC had an average of five releases per month, ranging from two in both February and December of 2013 to ten in May of 2012. MCI-Framingham averaged 28 civil releases a month, with a minimum of seven in December 2013 and a maximum of 49 in July 2012. The Lemuel Shattuck Hospital had an average of one civil release each month, with no civil releases being the most common result and a maximum of three released in August of 2013.

Graph II: Civil Releases from MA DOC, January 2012 through December 2013



Over the two-year trend period there was an overall decrease in civil releases from the MA DOC. There was a slight increase through 2012 which this was countered-balanced by a negative trend in 2013 to produce the negative overall trend. The release trend was not as strong as the admissions trend with admissions decreasing by a larger amount than releases, resulting in an overall decrease in civil commitments to the MA DOC.

The most numerous type of civil release, Section 35 inmates at MASAC followed a trend most similar to the total civil release trend. Overall, there was a decrease in Section 35 releases, with 2012 showing an increased release trend prior to the drop seen in 2013.

Bridgewater State Hospital saw a slight decrease over the trend period for both years; these yearly trends mirror those of mental health new court commitments during the trend period. Unlike Section 35 inmates, the mental health civil commitments saw a decrease in releases for both years; although, 2012 had a notably stronger trend.

The MTC had both an overall and yearly negative trends. MTC had the strongest negative overall trends for any of the civil release institutions.

Female civil releases from MCI-Framingham saw an overall negative trend for the two-year period. Both years saw a decrease in admissions, with 2012 having the more notable downward trend.

The Lemuel Shattuck Hospital saw an overall negative release trend for each year. As all types of civil commitment were released from the hospital, this trend reflected the overall civil commitment population decline over the trend period.

Table I displays the ways in which civil commitments were released from the MA DOC during the trend period. These releases were consolidated into five categories: release to the street; release to a from-and-after sentence (civil or a criminal commitments either at the MA DOC or another criminal justice agency); release to another sentence (often related to an inmate's fitness to stand trial); release to an outside agency (out of state, federal authority, ICE, etc.); and death of the inmate during their commitment (predominately due to pre-existing medical conditions).

Table I: MA DOC Civil Releases Category, January 2012-December 2013						
	MASAC	BSH	MTC	FRA	LSH	Total
Release to Street	2,336	38	101	470	7	2,952
Release to From and After	0	0	5	0	0	5
Release to Other Sentence	4	263	0	6	0	273
Release to Outside Agency	845	842	14	202	4	1,907
Death	0	2	3	0	6	11
Total	3,185	1,145	123	678	17	5,148

Over the trend period, 57.3% of civil commitments were released to the street, 0.1% were released to a from-and-after sentence, 5.3% were released to another sentence, 37.0% were released to an outside authority, and 0.2% died during their commitments.

CONCLUSION

Over the two-year trend period, from January 1, 2012, through December 31, 2013, there were a total of 5,059 civil new court commitments to, and 5,148 releases from the MA DOC. Each of the separate MA DOC institutions housing civil commitments saw a decrease in both civil admissions and releases, with admissions showing a nominally more negative trend. These changes were further reflected in the average monthly admissions and releases for each institution as well as each institution's minimum and maximum moves. Overall, the trends examined in this brief suggest that there was an overall decrease in the MA DOC civil population over 2012 and 2013 based on the monthly difference between admissions and releases.

This Research Brief was written by Daniel Feagans, Research Statistician; and Courtney Eaves, Research Analyst. Any comments or questions can be addressed by e-mail: Research@doc.state.ma.us. Copies of publications from the Research and Planning Division can be found on www.mass.gov/doc.