



**Choice Research Associates**

What gets measured gets done.

**HB 1463  
FAV  
Judiciary Committee**

**Shawn M. Flower, Ph.D.  
Principal Researcher  
Choice Research Associates  
703-915-0916  
shawn@choiceresearchassoc.com**

## Community Mediation Maryland Prisoner Re-entry Mediation Recidivism Summary

Choice Research Associates is an independent evaluator for the Community Mediation Maryland (CMM) Prison Re-entry Mediation program. This summary provides the findings of the 2014 Reentry Mediation In-Depth Recidivism Analysis<sup>1</sup> report which examined the impact of mediation on recidivism outcomes of arrest, conviction, incarceration, and returns to prison for violations of parole or probation. This study included 282 individuals who participated in mediation between November 2008 and March 2014 matched using quasi-experimental methods based on a calculated propensity score to two control groups.

Key findings of this study comparing the Mediation Treatment Group to the CMM Control Group indicate that participation in reentry mediation has a significant impact on all recidivism outcomes measured in this project, after controlling for key factors that may otherwise explain this finding (e.g., days since release, age, number of times previously incarcerated) (Table 1). Specifically:

- ❖ The probability of arrest is reduced by 13% for those who mediated compared to those who did not. The number of sessions is also a significant factor – with each additional mediation session, the probability of arrest is reduced by 8%;
- ❖ The probability of conviction is reduced by 15%, for those who mediated compared to those who did not. Each additional mediation session, the probability of conviction is reduced by 9%;
- ❖ The probability of being sentenced to incarceration is reduced by 10%, for those who mediated compared to those who have not. Each additional mediation session, the probability of conviction is reduced by 7%; and
- ❖ Among those returned to prison by DPSCS Department of Corrections (DOC), the probability of being returned for those who mediate is 12% less than those who do not mediate. The number of sessions is not a significant factor on this measure.
- ❖ Another key finding is that the Cox Regression survival analysis reveals that mediation reduces the hazard (or *risk*) of all outcomes reported compared to those who do not mediate. The Mediation Treatment Group “survive” in the community for a longer period of time than those in the CMM Control Group, even after controlling for relevant key factors (e.g., age, average days sentenced, number of times previously incarcerated). (Tables 2 and 3).

In May 2017, these results established the CMM re-entry mediation as a “promising” practice listed on the CrimeSolutions.Gov website. CRA is currently conducting another recidivism study including parole and probation outcomes, and measures of program model fidelity.

Building off the work of prior evaluations, Lisa M. Pierotte, M.A.<sup>2</sup>, tested if the varied nature of the treatment (selection of support persons, topic focus during mediation sessions, etc.) differentially

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<sup>1</sup> Flower, Shawn M. (2014). *Community Mediation Maryland Reentry Mediation In-Depth Recidivism Report*. Available: [http://www.choiceresearchassoc.com/documents/brief\\_md\\_women\\_released%20from\\_fy2007\\_to\\_fy2010.pdf?patient\\_inform-links=yes&legid=spcjp:0887403412466671v1](http://www.choiceresearchassoc.com/documents/brief_md_women_released%20from_fy2007_to_fy2010.pdf?patient_inform-links=yes&legid=spcjp:0887403412466671v1)

<sup>2</sup> Pierotte, L.M. (2018). *Evaluating treatment heterogeneity in the Community Mediation Maryland Re-Entry program*. (Unpublished master’s thesis). University of Maryland, College Park.

affected participants. The results of this study suggest that the CMM Reentry mediation model and its' participant-driven design works well for those involved. For example, there was no demonstrable difference in outcomes of recidivism for individuals who mediated with a romantic partner when compared to those that mediated with someone else (e.g., choosing a friend or sponsor). Essentially, the decisions made by subjects regarding the mediation services are well suited for their individual needs and the flexible/accommodating program design is likely crucial to the program's success.

Mediation is a short-term intervention with a long-term impact. In fact, the majority of the mediation participants had but one 2-hour session. Given the rigor of the analytic method, the quality and quantity of the data and the consistency of these results, it is clear that the CMM Reentry Mediation model is an effective tool for reducing the costs of involvement in the criminal justice system to the individual, their families, and the community. The impact of mediation is believed to be akin to a critical course correction to turn an individual away from a criminal trajectory through the improved relationship with family and support persons and adherence to agreements and plans negotiated during mediation. Mediation is an innovative tool that addresses a critical reentry factor and should be incorporated in a comprehensive and integrated reentry strategy.

### **Looking at Comparability of Comparison Groups**

A common criticism of program evaluation research is that those who participate in a program are fundamentally different than those who do not participate. To address this issue, researchers utilize random assignment to the treatment condition. Random assignment is considered the scientific "gold standard" -- because when individuals are assigned to treatment by chance, it can be assumed that variations (e.g., participation in programs, community returning to after release, whether or not on parole after release) between those in the comparison and the treatment groups are random and should not influence or bias the outcomes of the study. In many instances, random assignment is not feasible, so it is possible that those participating in a program that selected (or self-selected) into the treatment condition were substantially different than those who would be randomly assigned to treatment. One way to overcome this selection bias is to create a comparison group by calculating a propensity score using logistic regression to estimate the probability that had this intervention<sup>3</sup> employed random assignment, the individual would have been assigned to the treatment group.

Propensity score matching was used to refine the treatment group to match to two separate control groups for the comparison. The first control group ("CMM Control") was created from inmates who requested mediation services but did not receive those services. This control group provides for a stronger and more rigorous analysis because these individuals demonstrated the same "motivation" by requesting the service as those who were in the treatment group. The second control ("Cohort Control") includes those who were randomly selected among individuals released from DPSCS during the same period. The advantage to considering this group is that it allows for a comparison with the general population.

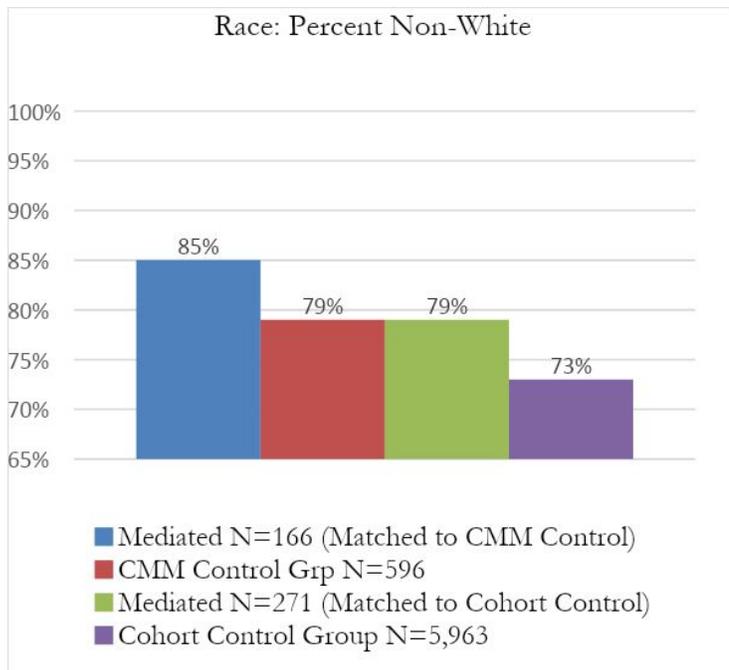
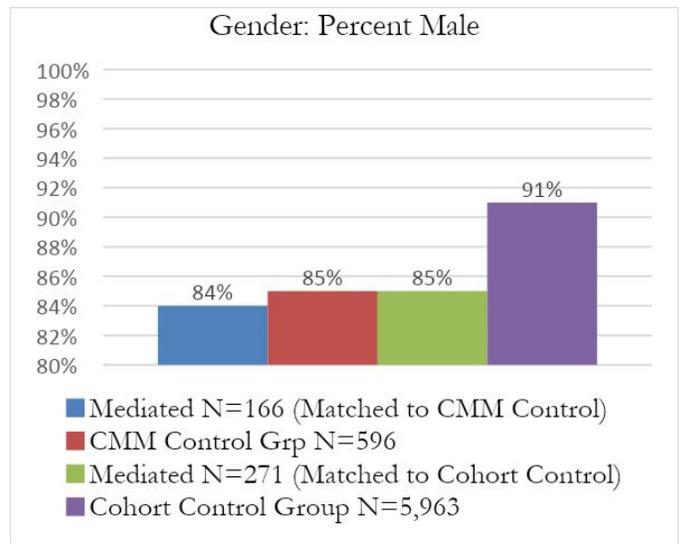
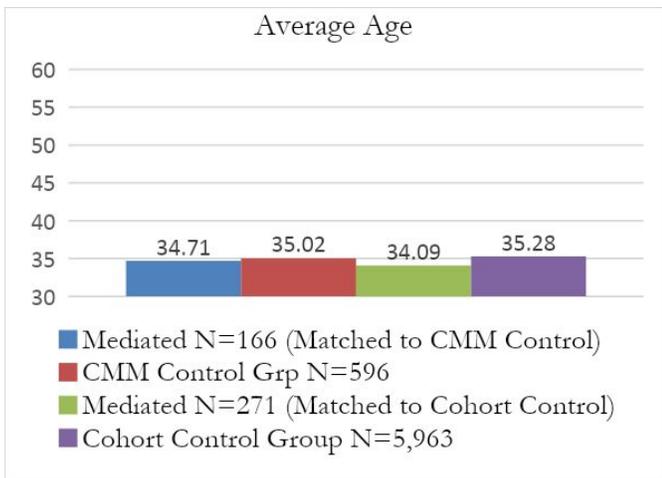
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<sup>3</sup> Rosenbuaam, P.R., & D.B. Rubin (1985). Constructing a Control Group Using Multivariate Matched Sampling Methods that Incorporate the Propensity Score. *The American Statistician*, 39, (1), 33-38.

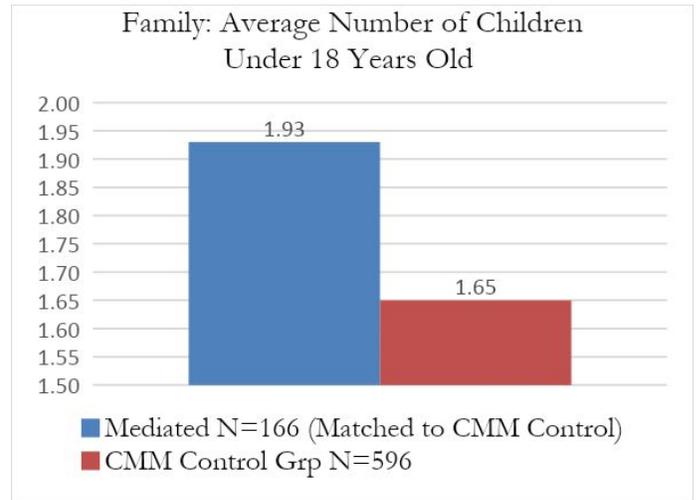
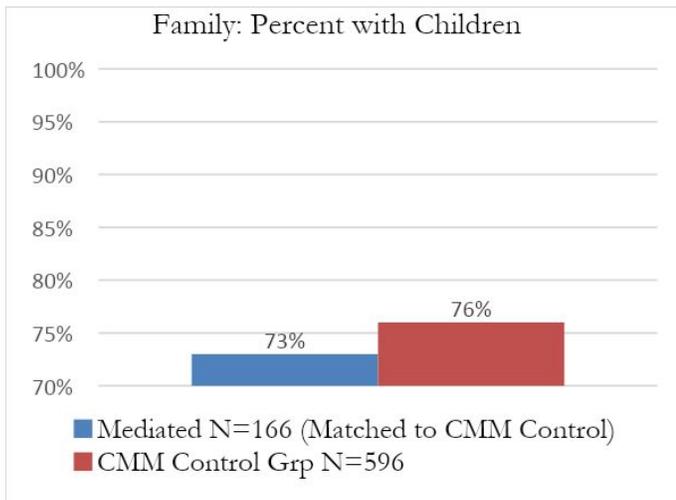
The following graphs exhibit how once the matching was completed, the treatment and comparison groups were comparable across a number of factors including demographics, parental status, and criminal history.

In the graphs below, the blue bars represent the 166 individuals who mediated and matched to 596 individuals who applied for mediation but did not participate (the CMM Control group, represented by the red bars). The green bars represent the larger sample of 271 individuals who mediated, compared to the 5,963 randomly selected and then matched individuals released from DPSCS during the same period (the Cohort Control group, represented by the purple bars).

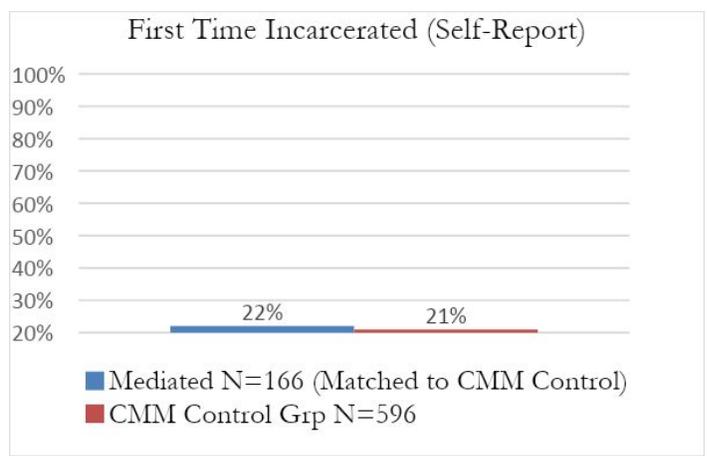
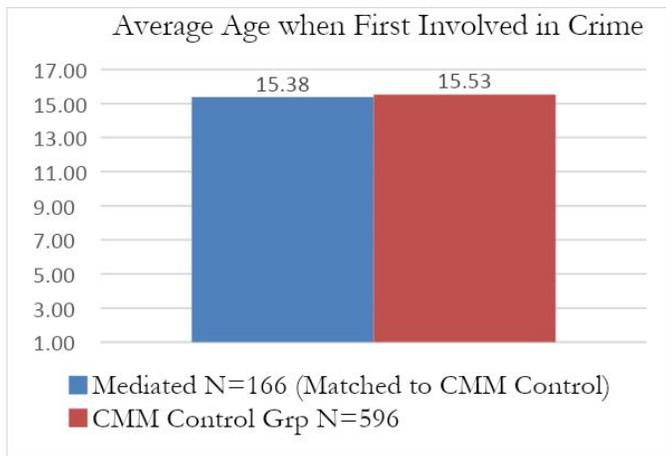
**Demographics**



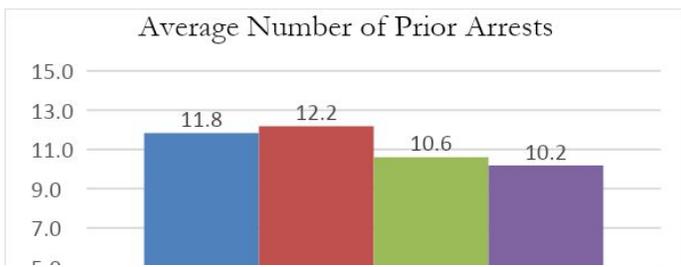
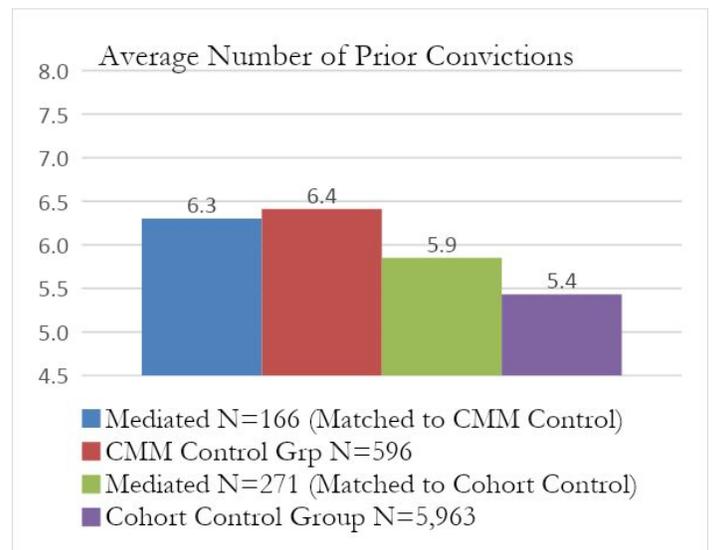
**Parent Characteristics (CMM Treatment and Control Group Only)**



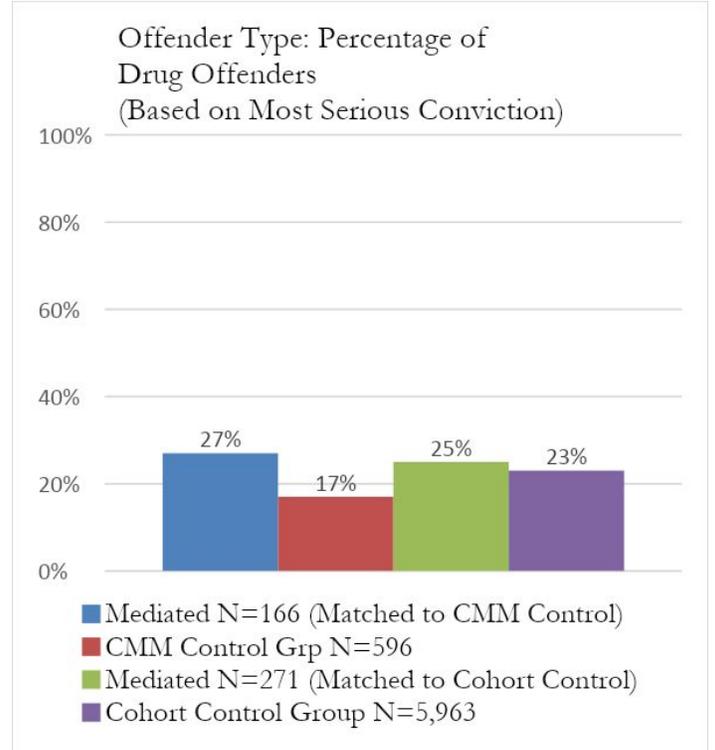
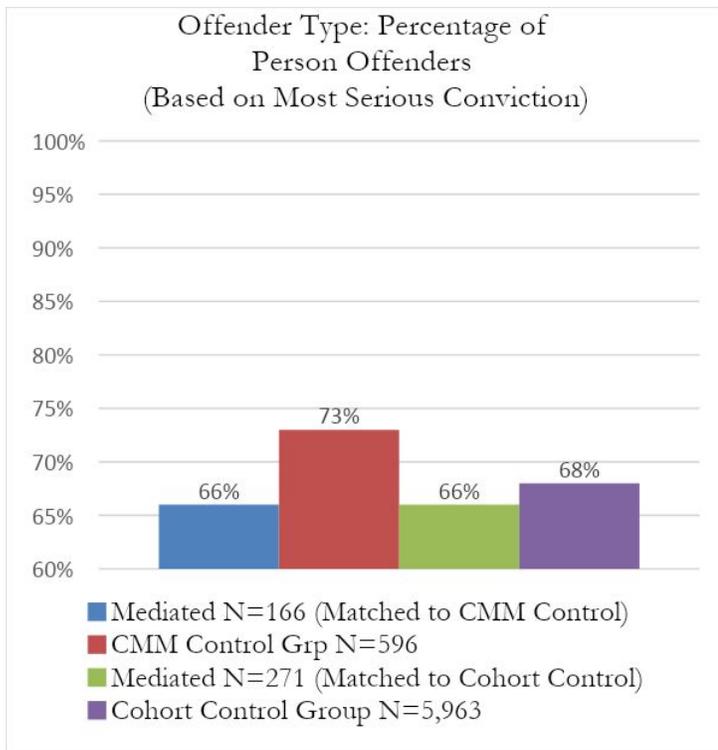
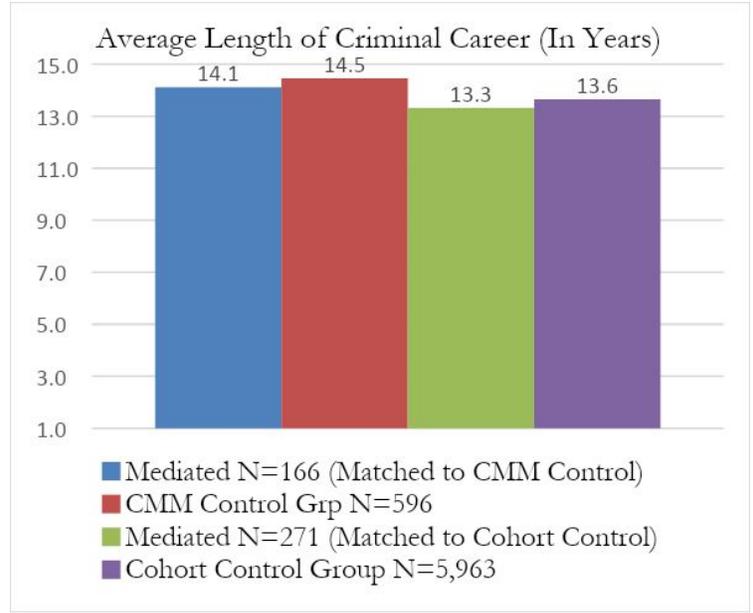
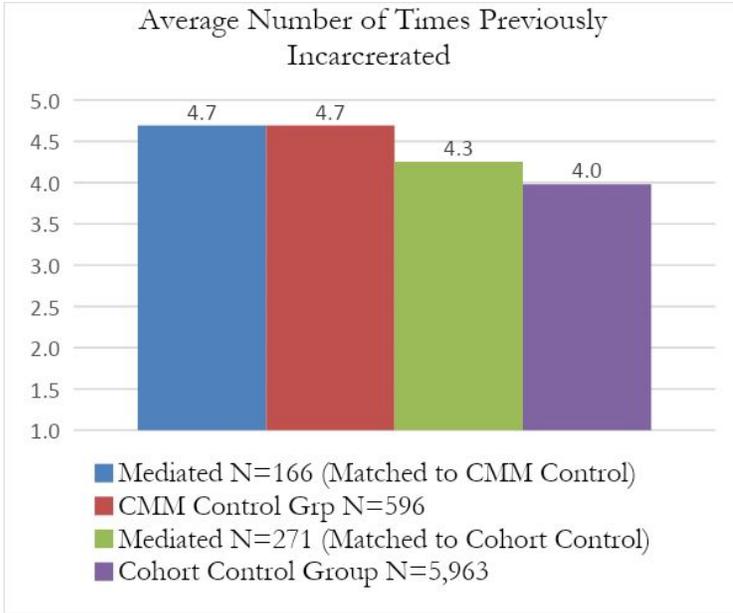
**Criminal Background (CMM Treatment and Control Group Only)**



**Criminal Background Based on CJIS Data**



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**Table 1: Impact of Mediation on Probability of Recidivism Event**

	CMM vs. CMM Control			CMM vs. Cohort Control		
	TX	CTRL	Treatment Impact	TX	CTRL	Treatment Impact
Arrest	45%	58%	-13%**	44%	56%	-12%**
Conviction	15%	30%	-15%***	21%	30%	-9%**
Incarceration	13%	23%	-10%**	Not Reported Due to Model Specification Concerns		
DOC Return	32%	44%	-12%*	Not Significant		

\* Significant at  $p < .05$  \*\* Significant at  $p < .01$  \*\*\* Significant at  $p < .000$

Tables 2 and 3 highlight the percentage individuals, by treatment condition, who survived (did not recidivate) post-release – at 1 year, 2 years, and 3 years. These are statistically significant differences.

**Table 2: Survival at 1, 2 and 3 years – Mediation Treatment vs. CMM Control Group**

	1 Year		At 2 Years		At 3 Years	
	TX	CTRL	TX	CTRL	TX	CTRL
Arrest	81%	68%	66%	51%	49%	39%
Conviction	92%	85%	86%	75%	78%	67%
Incarceration	92%	88%	88%	79%	85%	76%
DOC Return	78%	72%	70%	59%	65%	55%

**Table 3: Survival at 1, 2 and 3 years – Mediation vs. Cohort Control Group**

	1 Year		At 2 Years		At 3 Years	
	TX	CTRL	TX	CTRL	TX	CTRL
Arrest	81%	71%	67%	56%	53%	47%
Conviction	91%	86%	84%	77%	81%	69%
Incarceration	92%	88%	87%	81%	84%	75%
DOC Return	Not Significant			Not Significant		