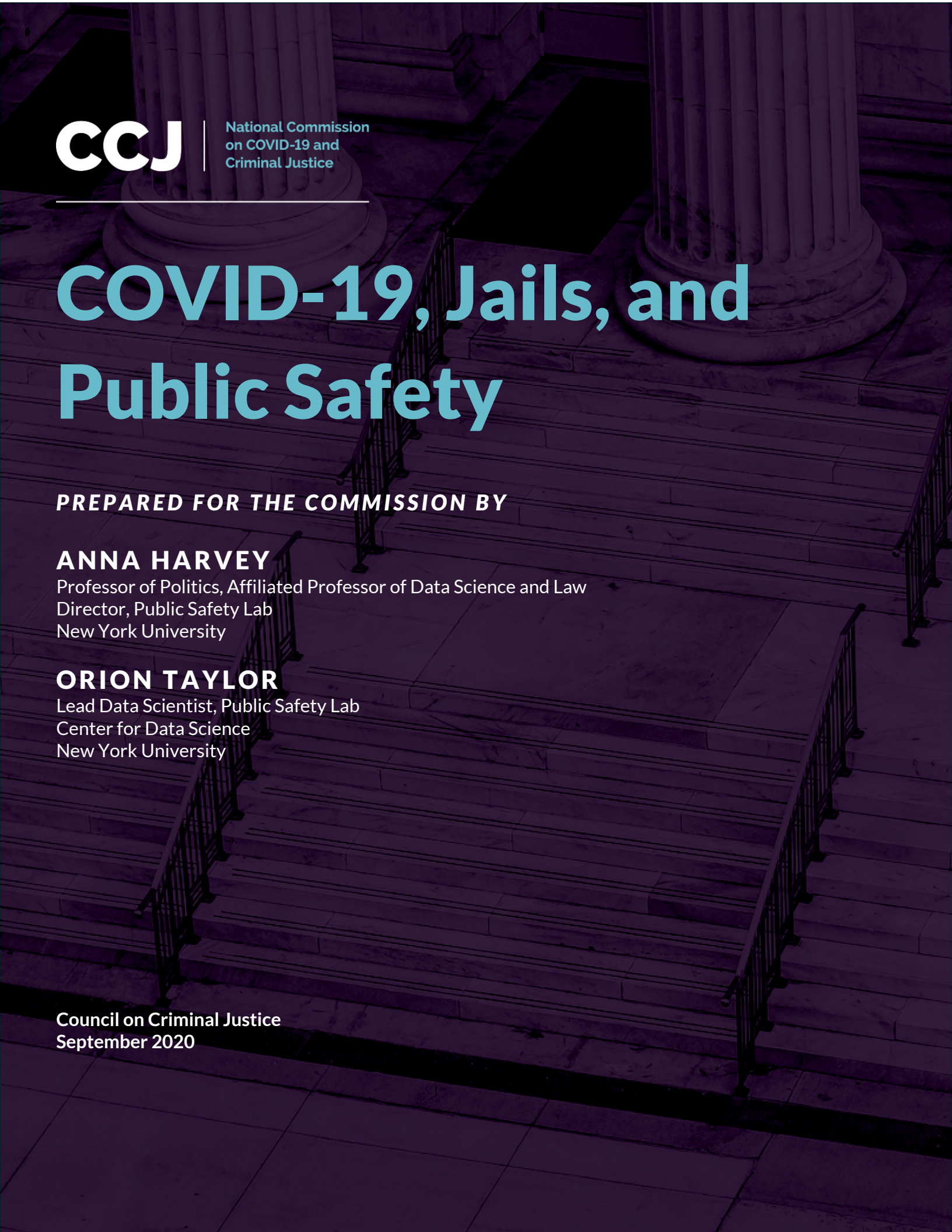

CCJ | National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice

COVID-19, Jails, and Public Safety

PREPARED FOR THE COMMISSION BY

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Executive Summary

+ **There are more than 3,000 county jails in the U.S., and they detain approximately 11 million individuals every year.** Risk of COVID-19 transmission within jails, and between jails and communities, is believed to be high. Reducing jail population density may reduce transmission risk. Yet some have expressed concern about the public safety consequences of reducing jail populations.

+ **This impact report draws on a sample of over 14 million daily jail records collected by New York University's Public Safety Lab between January 1 and July 20.** Jail populations in this sample decreased by an average of 31% after the issuance of the White House Coronavirus Guidelines on March 16, calling for "30 Days to Slow the Spread." These decreases in jail populations were achieved both through reductions in admissions, and through releases in excess of admissions. Jail populations do not appear to have been responsive to local COVID-19 prevalence.

+ **The decreases in jail populations after March 16 were accompanied by changes in the composition of jail populations.** After March 16, jail populations saw increases in the proportions of people who had been booked on felony charges, who were male, who were 25 years old or younger, and who were Black. These changes in the composition of jail populations have persisted even as jail populations have begun to increase.

+ The characteristics of those released changed as releases exceeded admissions after March 16. **By the second week after March 16, those released from county jails were on average 34% more likely to have been booked on felony charges, and had been detained for 71% longer, relative to people released during the week just prior to March 16.** These differences in the characteristics of those released persisted through July.

+ **Despite these differences in the characteristics of those released, there were no differences in 30-, 60-, or 90-day rebooking rates for those released within a window of two weeks after March 16, relative to those released during the week just prior to March 16.** More generally, rebooking rates for people released after March 16 remained below pre-pandemic rebooking rates.

- **People released during the six weeks after March 16 who had been booked on felony charges were no more likely to be rebooked within 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to people released from the same facility during the same period who had been booked on misdemeanor charges.** Both before and after March 16, people released after longer than average periods of detention were less likely to be rebooked after 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to people released after shorter than average periods of detention.

- **The estimates reported here may support further jail population reductions. The volume of people being released from county jails between mid-March and mid-July was on average 50% lower than the pre-pandemic volume, yet rebooking rates were no higher than pre-pandemic rates. Additional releases may not increase the total volume of rebooking beyond pre-pandemic levels.** Rebooking rates may change, however, as conditions change. Continued tracking of releases and rebooking rates will provide jurisdictions with real-time estimates of the impacts of their detention policies on public safety.

COVID-19 and Jails

Detained populations are thought to have high risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 due to population density, movement through facilities, and preexisting health conditions. [1] However, data on the incidence of COVID-19 in jails, and on transmission between jails and communities, are sparse.

Of the 2397 clusters of at least 50 COVID-19 cases identified by the New York Times as of August 21, 117 clusters or 4.9% were in county jails. [2] Jails with clusters of at least 50 COVID-19 cases are much larger on average than the typical jail, with an average facility capacity of 1,487, relative to the average facility capacity of 285 in the nation's 3162 jails.[3] Jails with clusters of at least 50 cases are also located in more urban counties with fewer white, more Black, and more Hispanic residents, relative to the population of jails.[4] However, we know little about COVID-19 incidence outside of these very large jails.

The absence of data has impeded inquiry into rates of COVID-19 transmission both within jails, and between jails and communities. An early modeling exercise based on typical jail inflows and outflows in Allegheny County, PA, and using COVID-19 infection data from South Korea, suggested that viral transmission both within jails and between jails and communities could be significant in the absence of drastic measures taken to reduce jail populations. [5] However, the model's predictions cannot be empirically tested with currently available data. An exercise using aggregate data on March releases from the Cook County Jail, and cumulative COVID-19 cases in Chicago zip codes by April 19, suggested that zip codes with greater numbers of March jail releases had higher rates of COVID-19 by April 19. [6] However, the authors could not rule out the possibility that neighborhoods with higher pre-existing COVID-19 rates saw higher rates of detention and release during March. A survey of COVID-19 incidence in a convenience sample of

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[1] Jiménez, Monik C., Cowger, Tori L., Simon, Lisa E., Behn, Maya, Cassarino, Nicole and Bassett, Mary T., "Epidemiology of COVID-19 Among Incarcerated Individuals and Staff in Massachusetts Jails and Prisons," JAMA Network Open, 3:8, pp. e2018851-e2018851, August 2020.
[2] https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html?.
[3] 2013 Census of Jails, Bureau of Justice Statistics (https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&iid=254).
[4] https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs.
[5] Lofgren, Eric, Lum, Kristian, Horowitz, Aaron, Madubuonwu, Brooke and Fefferman, Nina, "The Epidemiological Implications of Incarceration Dynamics in Jails for Community, Corrections Officer, and Incarcerated Population Risks from COVID-19," medRXiv preprint doi 10.1101/2020.04.08.20058842, May 4, 2020.
[6] Reinhart, Eric and Chen, Daniel L., "Incarceration and Its Disseminations: COVID-19 Pandemic Lessons From Chicago's Cook County Jail, Health Affairs 39:8, pp. 1412-1418, June 4, 2020.

correctional institutions between March 25 and May 28 included jails in the sample, but did not report COVID-19 rates separately for jails. [7]

A recent study using data obtained by court order from 13 Massachusetts county jails (a sample of 7,252 people) found a cumulative COVID-19 case rate of 36 per 1,000 people in jail by July 8. [8] This rate was lower than that found in 16 Massachusetts state prisons (52 cases per 1,000 jailed individuals), but more than double the rate in the Massachusetts state population (15 cases per ,1000 persons).[9] These data suggest that concern about the risk of COVID-19 transmission in jail facilities is not misplaced.

Reducing jail population density may minimize transmission risk.[10] Some, however, have expressed concern about the potential public safety risks posed by pandemic-induced releases from county jails. [11]

This impact report draws on jail data being collected by New York University's Public Safety Lab to assess how jail populations, admissions, releases, and the characteristics of those released changed during the pandemic, relative to the pre-pandemic period. We also ask whether 30-, 60-, or 90-day rebooking rates of those released changed during the pandemic, relative to those released pre-pandemic.

PUBLIC SAFETY LAB JAIL DATA INITIATIVE

There currently exist no real-time individual-level data on those detained in the nation's 3162 county jails. To address this data gap, the Public Safety Lab's Jail Data Initiative is collecting daily individual-level data from over 1100 jails that post their daily jail rosters online. Daily data collection was rolled out over these facilities between September 2019 and June 2020.[12]

As of March 1, 2020, consistent daily data collection was in place for 375 facilities, serving 366 counties or county equivalents. This report draws upon the daily individual-level data collected for these 375 facilities, from the start of data collection for each facility through

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[7] Alsan, Marcella and Yang, Crystal, "National Commission on Correctional Health Care COVID-19 Survey of Correctional Facilities," June 1, 2020.
[8] Jiménez et al 2020.
[9] These populations also differed in testing rates. The MA state population had a testing rate of 168 per 1,000 persons; MA county jails had a testing rate of 254 per 1,000 people in jail, while MA prisons had a testing rate of 1,093 per 1,000 people.
[10] Lofgren et al 2020.
[11] https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/nyregion/coronavirus-rikers-nyc-jail.html.
[12] The Public Safety Lab's Jail Data Initiative is supported by Arnold Ventures, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

July 20, 2020. The sample, which includes facilities located in 39 states, consists of 14,393,325 daily records of jailed individuals.[13]

Table 1 in the Appendix reports comparisons between the attributes of the facilities/counties in the Public Safety Lab sample and those in the 2013 BJS Census of Jails. The average facility capacity of the jails in the sample is slightly larger but not statistically different from the population BJS facility capacity. There are also no significant county-level differences between the sample and the population of jails in terms of population size, median family income, or percent Hispanic residents. The counties covered by the sample of jails have slightly more Black residents, slightly fewer white residents, and are slightly more urban, relative to the counties covered by the population of jails; these differences are significant in statistical terms but are relatively small in magnitude.

COVID-19 AND JAIL POPULATIONS

Figure 1 reports the total daily jail population for the full sample of jails, and the rolling 7-day average of new COVID-19 cases, for the 366 counties in which these jails are located. As is evident in Figure 1, despite the concerns raised about the potential for COVID-19 transmission in county jails, jail populations do not appear to have been responsive to local COVID-19 prevalence. Instead, jail populations began to drop sharply after March 16. On that day the White House issued "Coronavirus Guidelines for America," which called for "30 Days to Slow the Spread."[14] These Guidelines stated that, "in states with evidence of community transmission...indoor and outdoor venues where groups of people congregate should be closed."

Jail populations decreased sharply immediately after the issuance of the March 16 Guidelines. Between March 1 and May 2, when average jail populations reached their lowest level, the average jail population in the full sample decreased by 31%. Between May 2 and July 20, the average jail population subsequently increased by 12%, despite steep local increases in new COVID-19 cases.

[13] States without jails in the sample are Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Nevada, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.
[14] https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf.

FIGURE 1

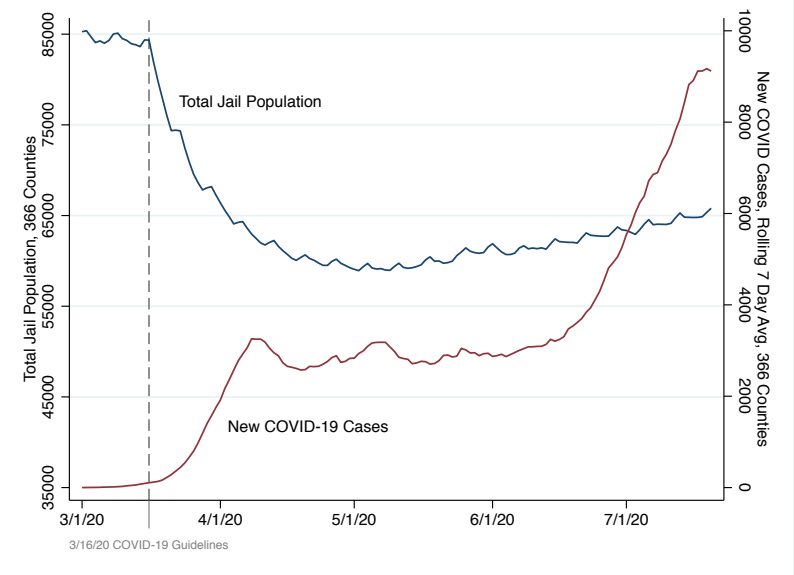


Figure 2 reports the average daily jail population for the full sample, and for the subsamples of jails for which daily data collection had begun by January 1 and February 1, respectively. Figure 3 reports event study estimates of the weekly change in daily jail populations, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16.[15] Figure 3 indicates that there was no significant trend in jail populations prior to March 16. Jail populations dropped sharply in the week after March 16 and continued to decrease for 8 weeks. Jail populations began to rise again in mid-May.

[15] All of the event study plots reported here display 95% confidence intervals, include fixed effects for each jail facility, and cluster standard errors on facility.

FIGURE 2

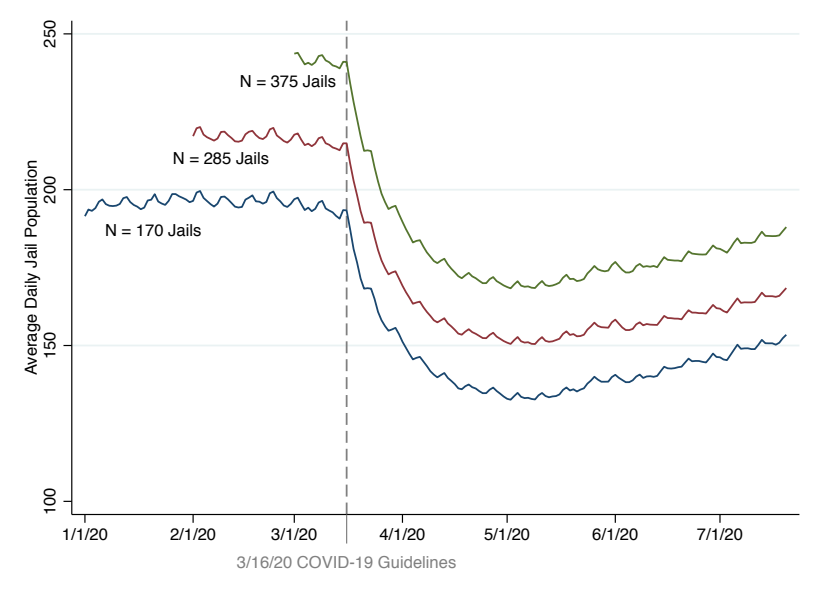
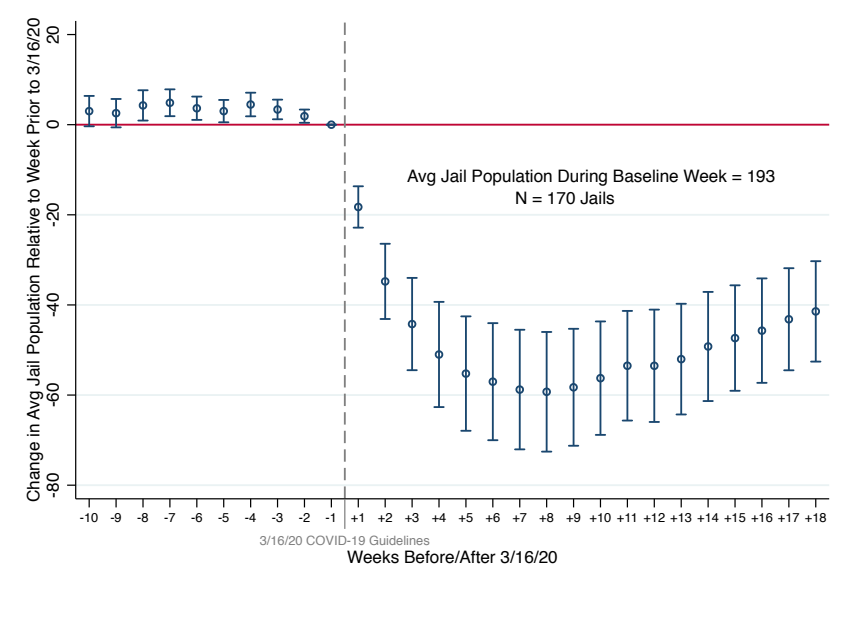


FIGURE 3



The lack of responsiveness of jail populations to local COVID-19 prevalence, and the decrease in jail populations after the issuance of the White House Coronavirus Guidelines, may suggest the importance of clear policy guidelines for reducing risk of disease transmission within county jails.

Table 2 in the Appendix reports average jail population decreases by Census region between March 16 and May 2. Jails located in the West saw the largest population decreases over this period; jails located in the South saw the smallest decreases. Smaller jails have more variability in percentage population changes. Tables 3 and 4 in the Appendix report, for those facilities with jail populations greater than the mean sample population of 242 on March 16, the facilities with the largest and smallest percentage population decreases between March 16 and May 2.

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON THE COMPOSITION OF JAIL POPULATIONS

The decreases in jail populations after March 16 were accompanied by changes in the composition of jail populations. As reported in Figures 4 - 9 in the Appendix, as jail populations decreased the shares of people who were booked on at least one felony charge, who were male, who were less than or equal to 25 years old, and who were Black all increased. The shares of people who were booked on only misdemeanor charges, who were female, and who were white all decreased.

COVID-19 AND JAIL ADMISSIONS

One mechanism driving the reductions in jail populations seen between March 16 and May 2 may have been reductions in admissions. Figure 10 reports average daily admissions between January 1 and July 20. Admissions typically follow a weekly cycle, peaking on Saturdays and reaching their lowest levels on Mondays. Average daily admissions oscillated between five and 10 admissions prior to March 16. Figure 11 reports event study estimates of the weekly change in daily admissions, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16. Both figures indicate that there was no weekly trend in daily admissions prior to March 16, and that admissions dropped sharply and substantially after March 16. Average daily admissions dropped by 50% in the week immediately following March 16, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16. By the first week in April, average daily admissions had fallen by 69%, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16. Although daily admissions began to increase in mid-April, they have remained approximately 50% below baseline levels.

FIGURE 10

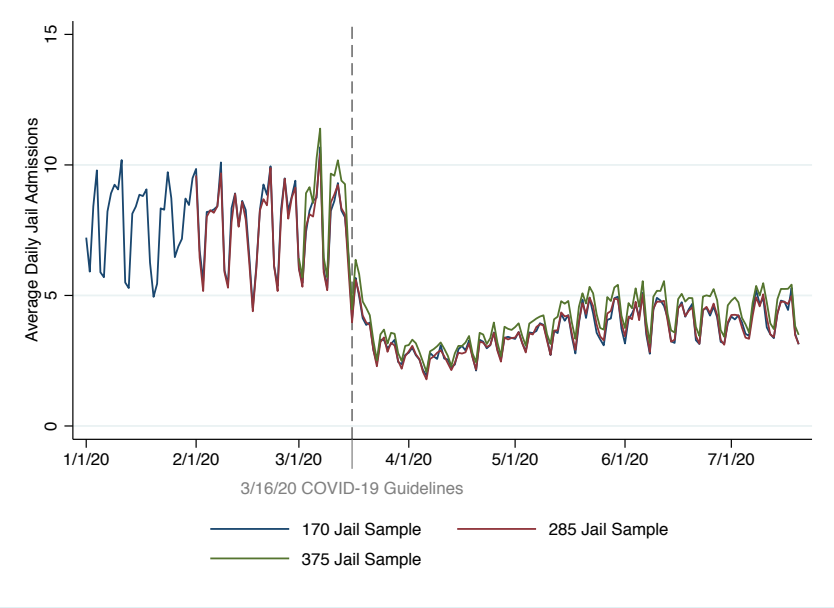
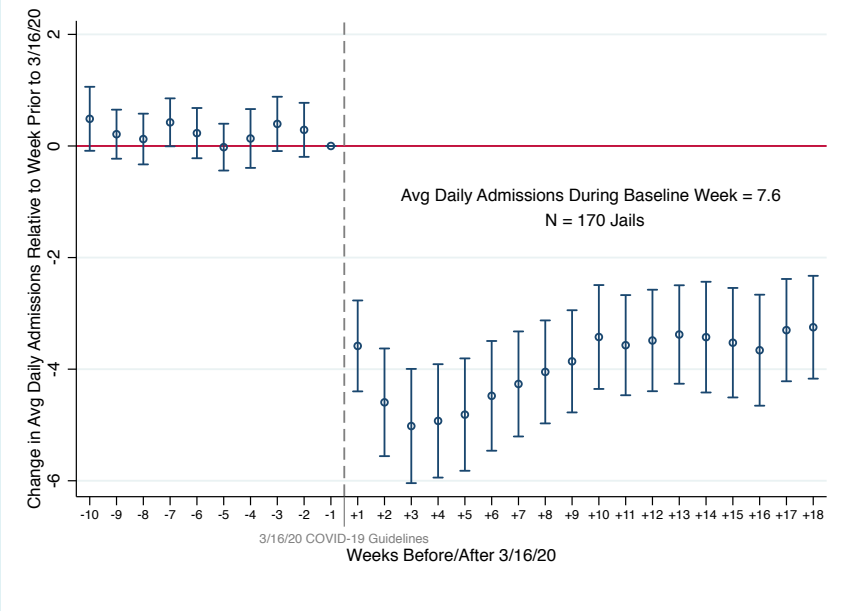


FIGURE 11



COVID-19 AND JAIL RELEASES

Jail populations may also have decreased between March 16 and May 2 through increases in releases. Figure 12 reports average daily releases between January 1 and July 20. Releases follow a weekly cycle that is the inverse of the weekly admissions cycle, typically peaking on Mondays and reaching their lowest levels on Saturdays. The number of weekly releases, however, tends to be approximately equal to the number of weekly admissions. Like average daily admissions, average daily releases oscillated between five and 10 releases prior to March 16. Figure 13 reports estimates of the weekly change in average daily releases, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16.

Both figures indicate that there was no weekly trend in average daily releases before March 16. Average daily releases dropped after March 16, but not immediately, and initially by less than the reductions in average daily admissions. Although average daily admissions dropped by 50% in the week immediately following March 16, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16, average daily releases stayed at about the same level. By the first week in April, although average daily admissions had fallen by 69%, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16, average daily releases had fallen by only 50%. Daily releases have continued to remain approximately 50% below baseline levels.

FIGURE 12

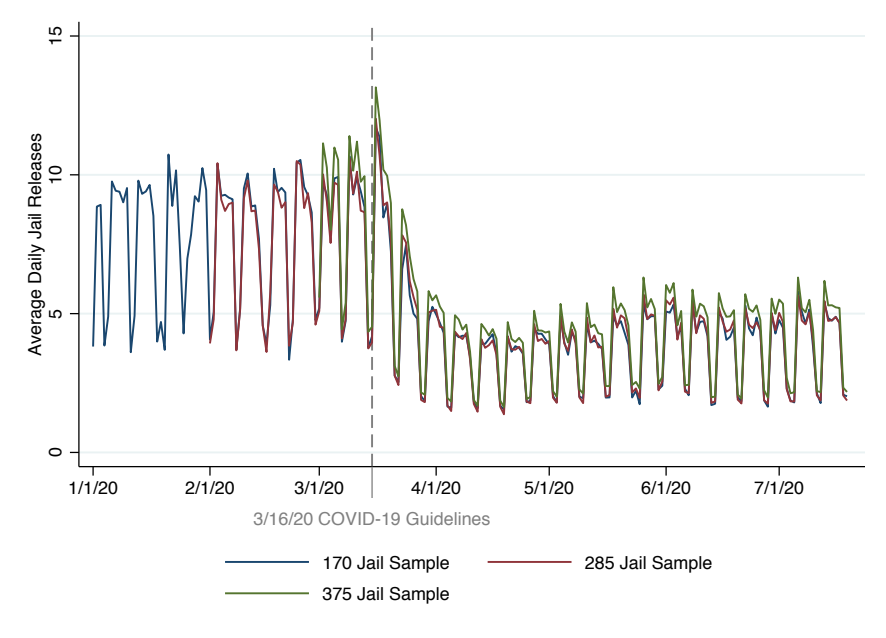


FIGURE 13

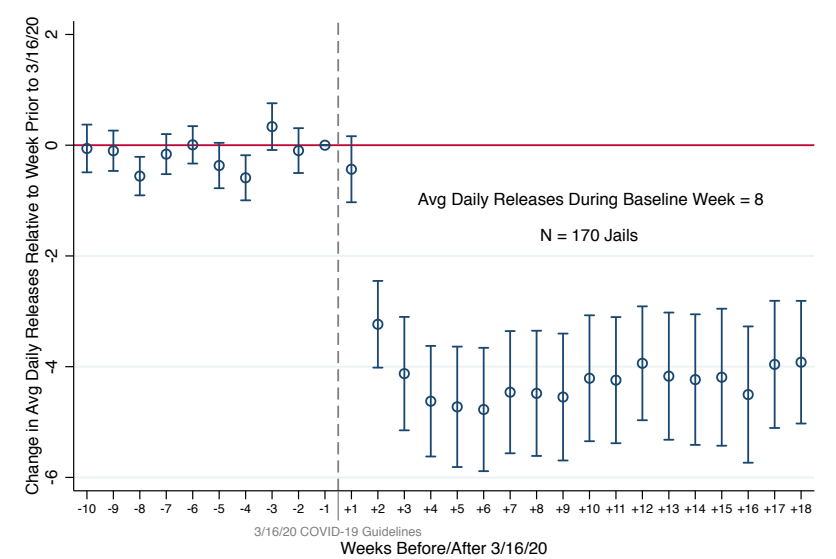


Figure 14 reports average daily "excess releases," or releases in excess of admissions. Average daily excess releases oscillate around zero between January 1 and March 16. Excess releases jumped during the week immediately following March 16, and remained elevated for several weeks after March 16 before returning to approximately baseline levels. Figure 15 reports event study estimates of the average weekly change in daily "excess releases," or releases in excess of admissions, relative to the week prior to March 16. Weekly averages of daily excess releases hovered around zero during the two weeks prior to March 16. Excess releases jumped by about three releases per jail per day during the week immediately following March 16, and remained elevated at a rate of 1.5 additional excess releases per jail per day during the second week after March 16. Excess releases remained elevated relative to the baseline week for two more weeks after March 16, before dropping to slightly below the baseline rate.

FIGURE 14

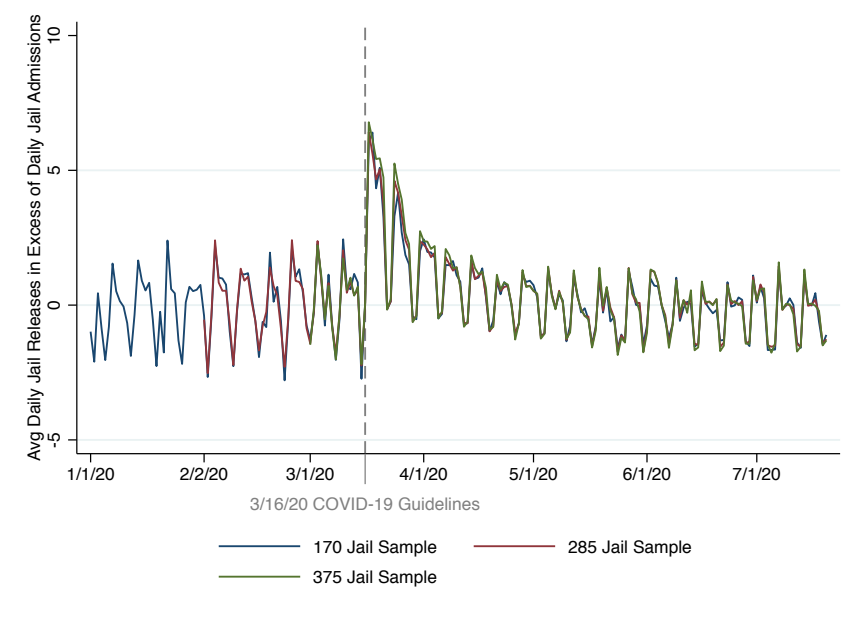
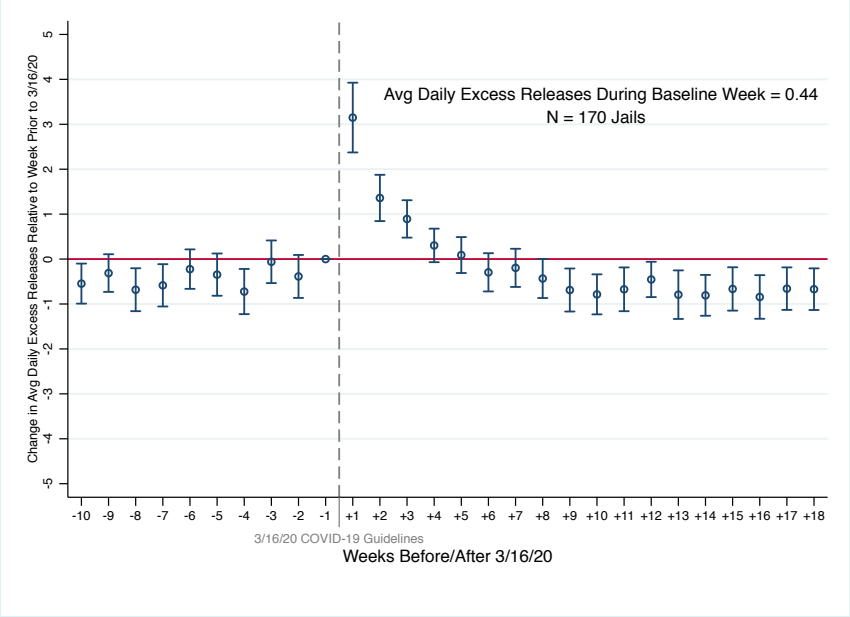


FIGURE 15



Below we explore how the characteristics of those released changed just after March 16 relative to the characteristics of those released just before March 16. We also ask whether 30-, 60-, or 90-day rebooking rates of those released changed just after March 16, relative to those released just before March 16. In the figures below we highlight with red dashed lines the two weeks just before and just after March 16. Comparisons within this window may be more likely to reduce the potential impact of other factors on outcomes.

COVID-19 JAIL RELEASES AND BOOKING CHARGES

Figure 16 reports the average daily proportion of those released who had been booked on at least one felony charge, for the samples of jails for which we have daily data on booking charges. There are weekly cycles in this proportion; typically a smaller proportion of those released on weekends has been booked on felony charges, relative to weekday releases. Weekly average proportions of those released who had been booked on felony charges oscillated around 40% during the two-week period immediately prior to March 16. The proportion of those released who had been booked on felony charges then increased sharply immediately after March 16 and remained elevated relative to the baseline week during the two-week period after March 16.

Figure 17 reports, for the sample of jails for which we have daily data on booking charges by March 1, event study estimates of changes in the proportion of those released who had been booked on felony charges, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16. During this baseline week, on average 37% of those released had been booked on felony charges in this sample of jails. This share jumped by 6.9 percentage points, or by 18.6%, in the week immediately after the issuance of the March 16 guidelines, and by 12.7 percentage points, or by 34.3% over the baseline rate, in the second week after March 16. The proportion of those released who had been booked on felony charges remained elevated relative to the baseline week for the duration of the observation period.

FIGURE 16

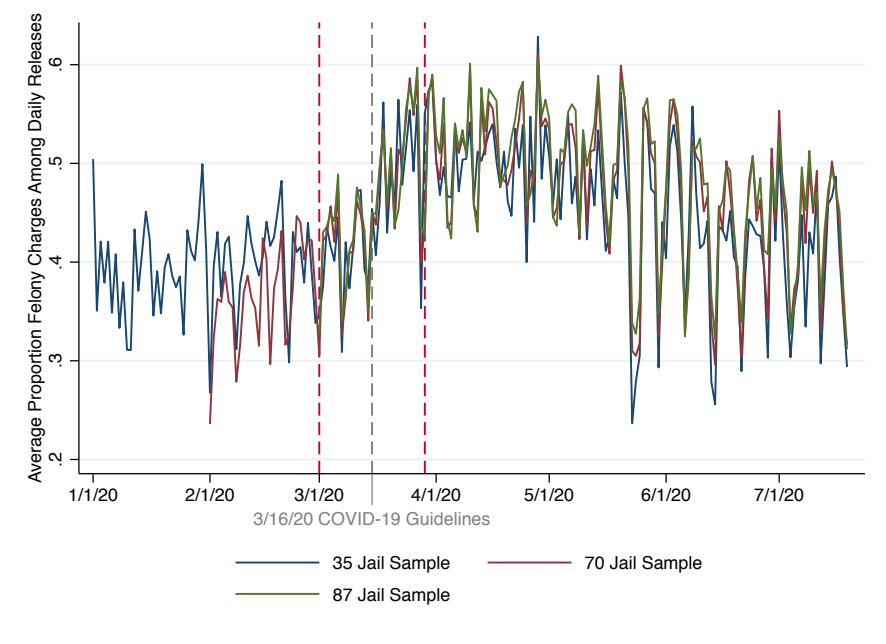
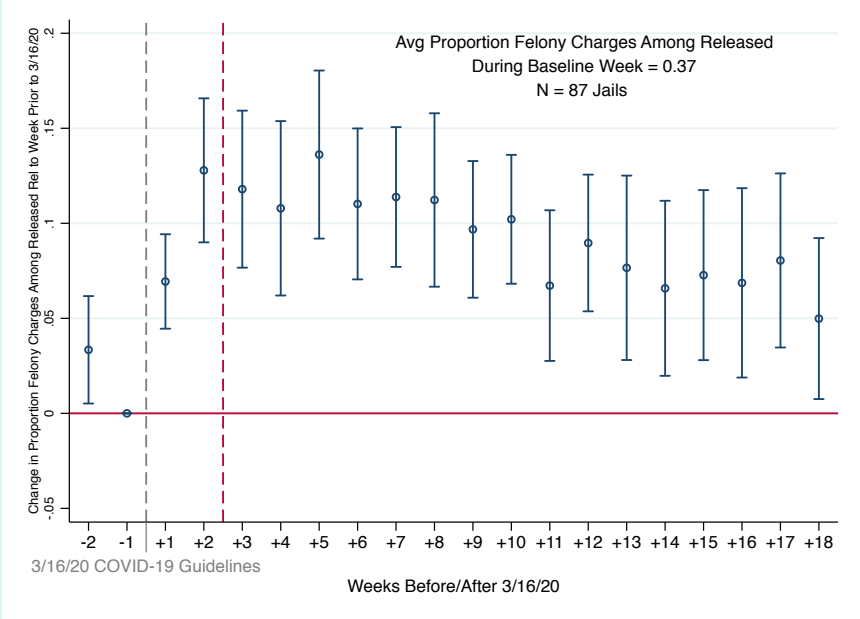


FIGURE 17



COVID-10 JAIL RELEASES AND DURATION OF DETENTION

Figure 18 reports the average duration of detention among daily releases between January 1 and July 20. Average detention duration among daily releases also follows a weekly cycle; those released on weekends tend to have had shorter detention spells on average, relative to those released during weekdays. During the two-week period prior to March 16, daily average detention durations, among those released, oscillated between approximately 10 - 20 days. Daily average detention durations of those released then climbed immediately after March 16, and remained elevated relative to the baseline rate during the two weeks after March 16.

Figure 19 reports event study estimates of weekly changes in the average duration of detention spells, among those released, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16. For the sample of 375 jails for which we have continuous daily data from March 1 to July 20, the average duration of detention among those released was approximately 15 days during the week immediately prior to March 16, and was relatively stable during the two weeks prior to March 16. Those released during the week immediately following March 16 had detention durations that were on average 5.5 days or 36.7% longer, relative to those released during the week immediately prior to March 16. Those released during the second week after March 16 had detention durations that were on average 10.7 days or 71.3% longer than during the baseline week. Detention durations among those released remained elevated relative to the baseline week throughout the period of observation.

FIGURE 18

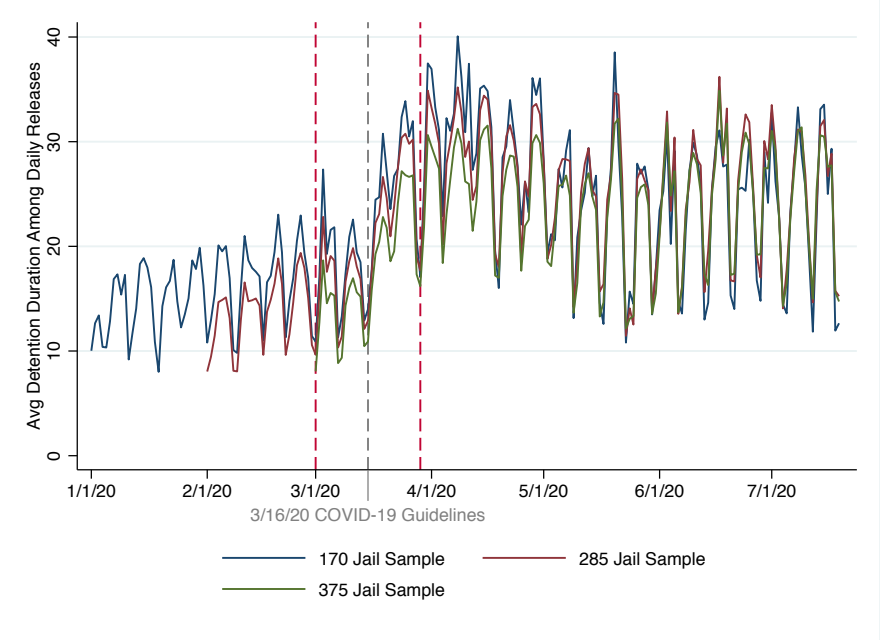
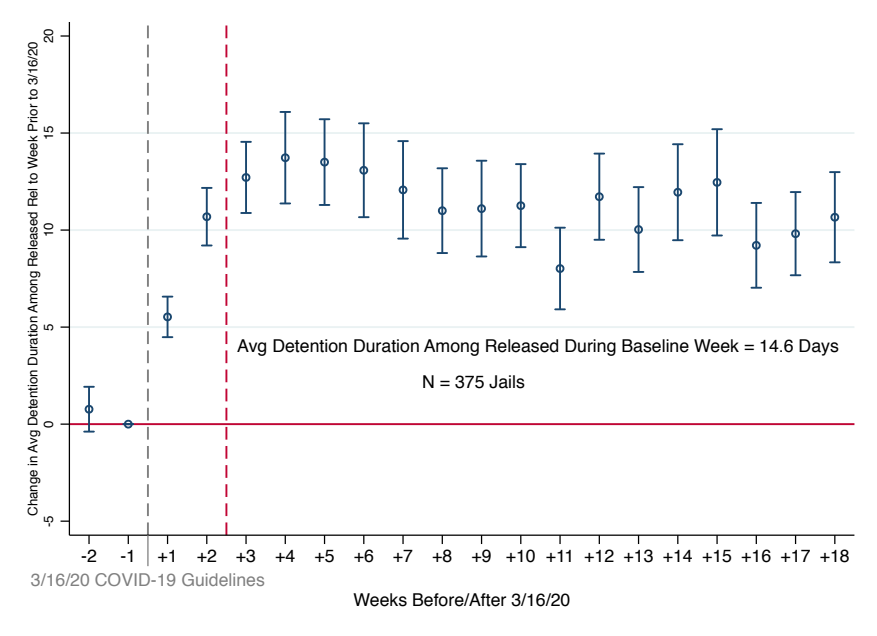


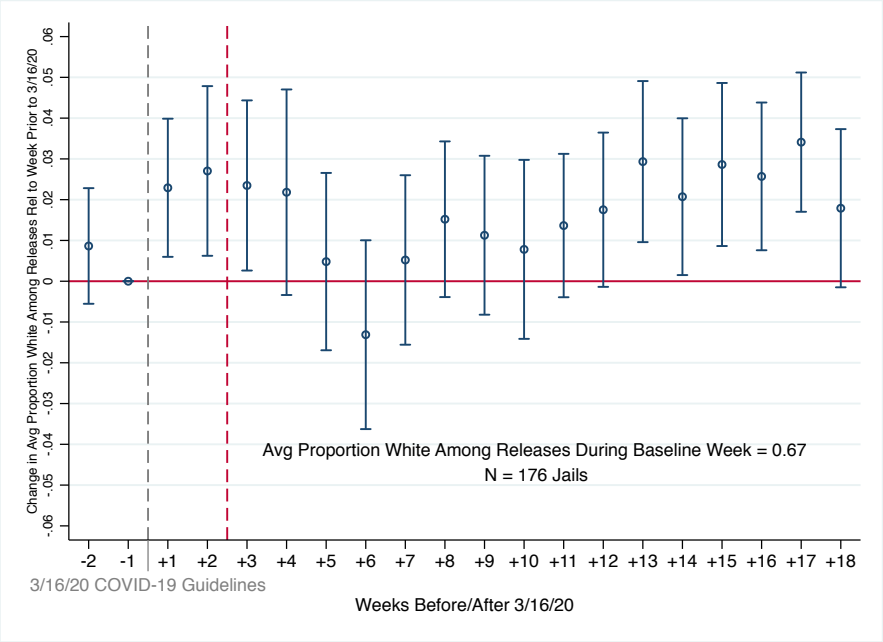
FIGURE 19



COVID-19 JAIL RELEASES AND RACE/ETHNICITY

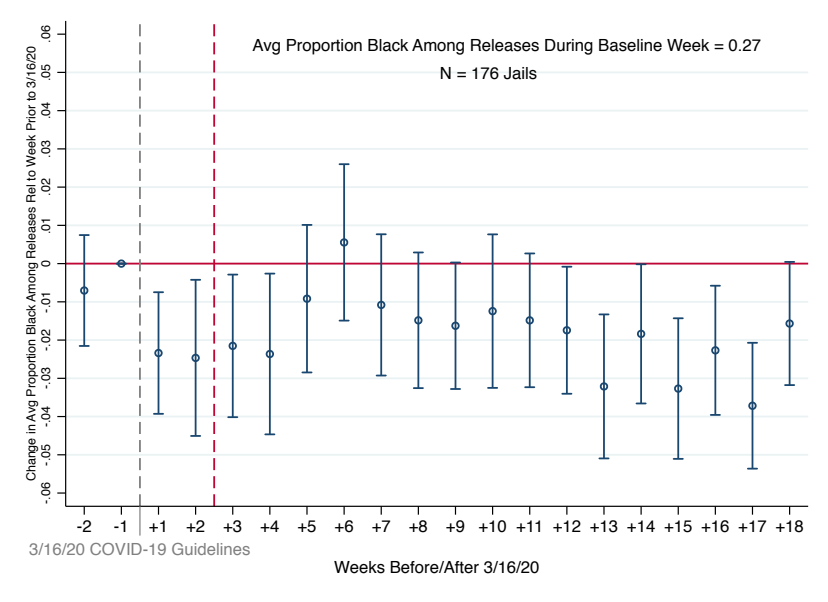
Figures 20 and 21 report event study estimates of the changes in the average proportions of white and Black people among jail releases, relative to the week immediately prior to March 16, for the sample of jails reporting detained persons' race/ethnicity. During the week just prior to March 16, on average 67% of those released were white, while 27% of those released were Black. During the two weeks just after March 16, the proportion of white people among those released was higher than in the baseline week by approximately 2 percentage points, or by about 3%, while the proportion of Black people among those released was lower by about the same amount, or by about 7.5%. There is an average 1.5 percentage point or 5.5% decrease in the proportion of Black people among all those released after March 16, relative to those released prior to March 16; this decrease is significant at $p < .10$.[16] We found no significant changes in the proportion Hispanic among those released.

FIGURE 20



[16] Estimate derived from a two-way fixed effect difference in differences model, with fixed effects for facilities and weeks, and standard errors clustered on facility.

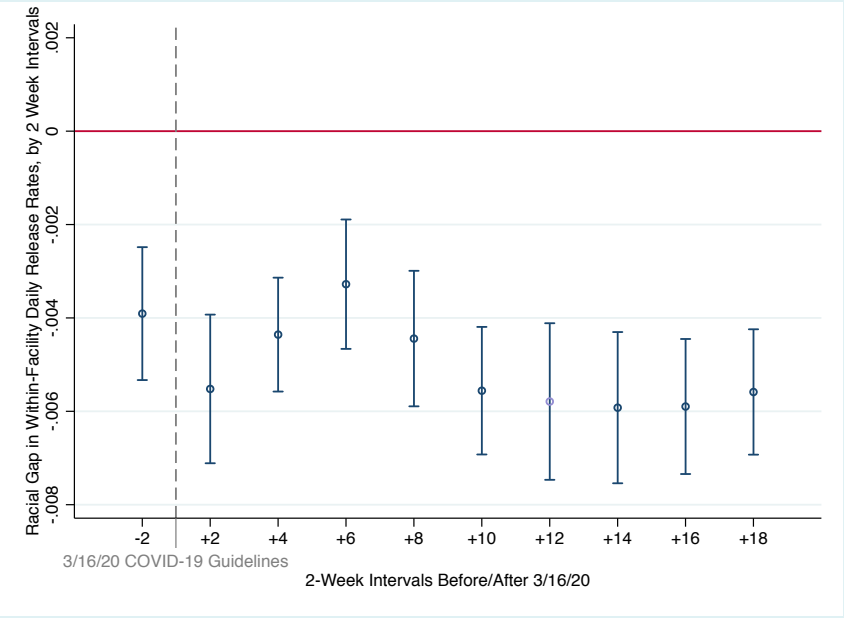
FIGURE 21



The decreases in the proportion of Black people among those released after March 16 are concerning. We can also look at within-facility racial disparities in daily release rates. The daily release rate for Black people is defined as the proportion of Black people in a given facility who are released on a given day; the corresponding rate for white people is the proportion of white people in that facility who are released on the same day. Figure 22 reports estimates of the within-facility racial gap in daily release rates, for two-week intervals between March 1 and July 20, with 95% confidence intervals.[17]

[17] Models estimating the within-facility racial gap in daily release rates include fixed effects for facilities and day of week, weight for facility population, and cluster standard errors on facilities.

FIGURE 22



In every two-week period, white people are more likely to be released on any given day of the week than Black individuals in the same facility. There is suggestive evidence that racial disparities in release rates may have widened over time, although the over-time differences in release rates are not significant at conventional thresholds. Future work using more detailed information about those in jail may help to clarify the sources of these racial disparities in release rates.

We also explored whether those released after March 16 differed by age, relative to those released prior to March 16, but found no significant differences in the composition of those released by age.

COVID-19 JAIL RELEASES AND REBOOKING RATES

The estimates reported here suggest that, just after the issuance of the March 16 Coronavirus Guidelines, jails released people who were different from those released just before the issuance of those Guidelines. By the second week after March 16, those released from county jails were 34.3% more likely to have been booked on felony charges and had been detained for 71.3% more days, relative to people released during the week just prior to March 16. These differences in the characteristics of those released persisted throughout the period of observation. Given these changes in the composition of those

released, we might expect to also see changes in the rates at which those released were rebooked into jails.

Rebooking rates are not identical to reoffending rates. A rebooking indicates that an arrest was made of a previously detained individual, and that a decision was made to detain that individual. However, by tracking rebooking rates both before and after March 16, we can at least assess whether rebooking rates changed as the characteristics of those released changed.

Figures 23 - 25 report event study estimates of changes in rebooking rates within 30, 60, and 90 days after release, relative to the week just prior to March 16. Rebooking rates are averaged by facility and by week, for jails for which we have continuous daily data from January 1 - July 20. Facility fixed effects absorb constant facility-specific differences in rebooking rates. All figures report the baseline average rebooking rates for the week just prior to March 16, 2020. Estimates are most comparable within the four-week window denoted by the two red dashed lines.

FIGURE 23

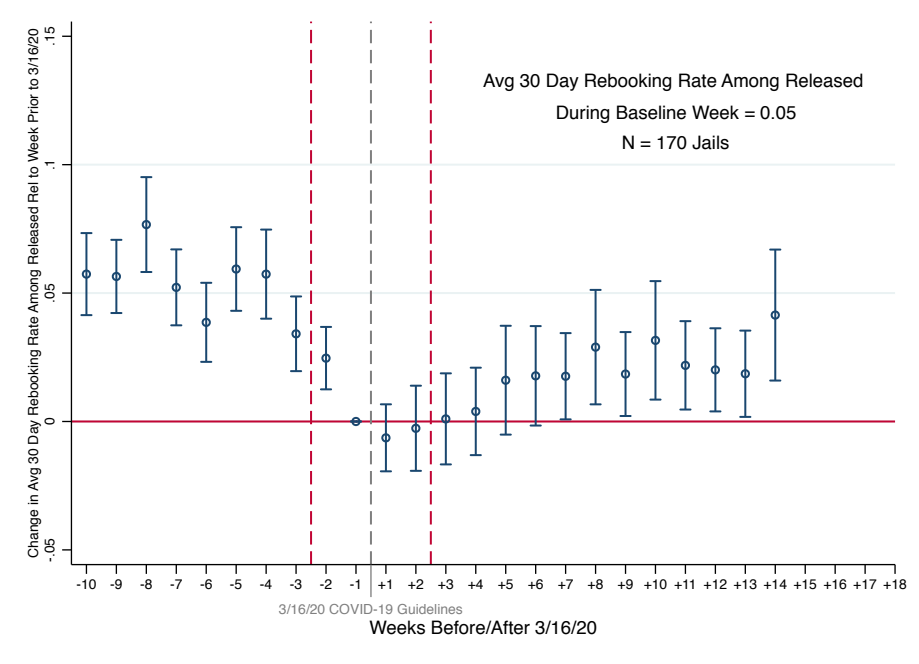


FIGURE 24

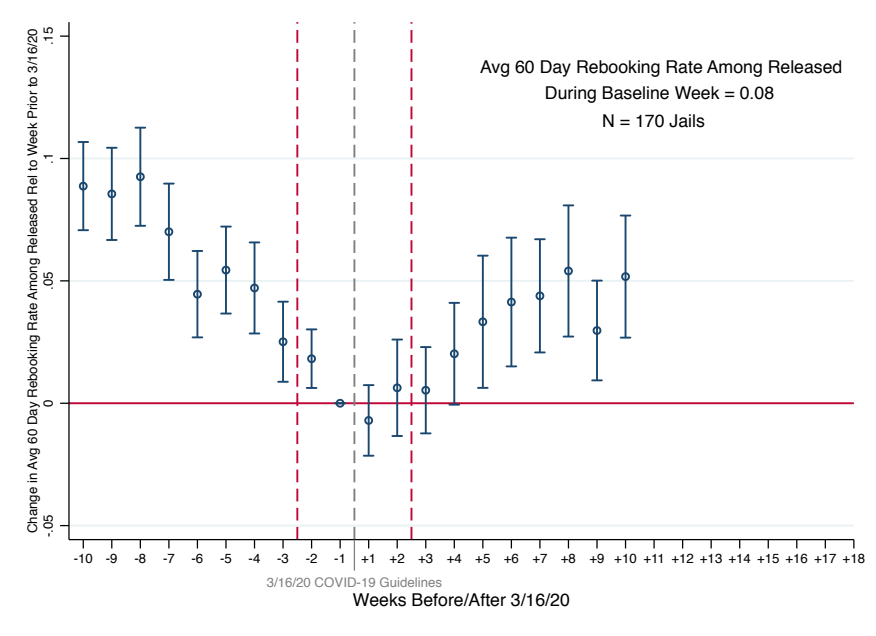
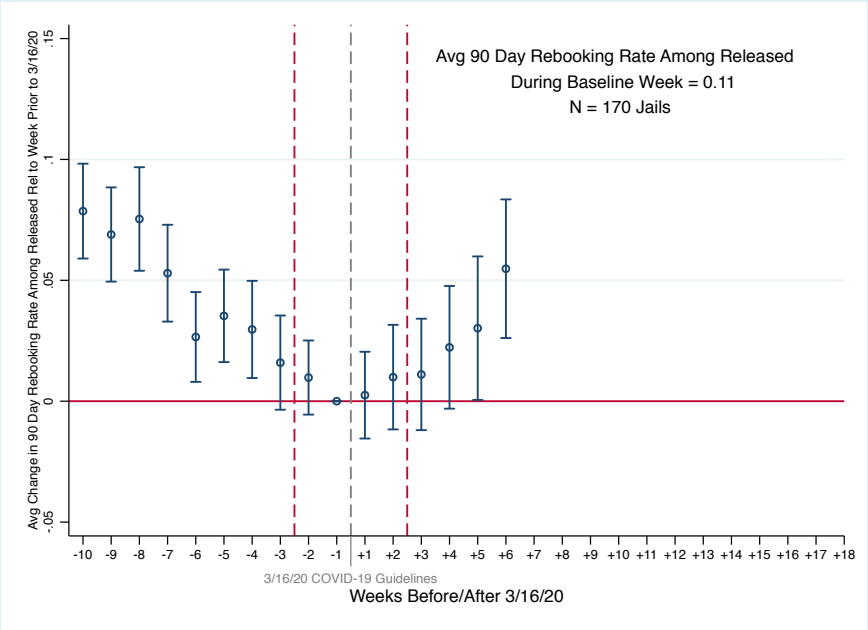


FIGURE 25



Figures 16 - 21 show that there were immediate changes in the characteristics of released individuals immediately after March 16. Despite these immediate changes in the characteristics of the released population, Figures 23 - 25 show no significant differences in 30-, 60-, or 90-day rebooking rates across these populations of released people. During the week just prior to March 16, these rebooking rates are 5%, 8%, and 11%, respectively. There are no significant changes in these rebooking rates during the two weeks after March 16.

Rebooking rates eventually began to rise among those released after the two-week window following March 16. However, rebooking rates after March 16 do not reach the levels seen among those released during January, before the pandemic onset.

The Appendix reports estimates of changes in rebooking rates for the larger samples of jails for which we have continuous daily data from February 1 and from March 1, respectively. Estimates are very similar to those reported in Figures 23 - 25.

BOOKING CHARGES, DETENTION DURATION, AND REBOOKING RATES

The lack of changes in rebooking rates in the weeks just after March 16, relative to the week just before March 16, despite the evident changes in the characteristics of those released, raises questions about the relationships between the characteristics of released people and rebooking rates.

Figure 26 reports estimates of the within-facility difference in weekly rebooking rates for those booked on felony charges, relative to those booked on misdemeanor charges, for the six weeks before March 16 and the six weeks after March 16. All estimates include fixed effects for both facility and week, and cluster standard errors on facilities. Among those released during the six weeks prior to March 16, those booked on felony charges were about 2.5 percentage points more likely to be rebooked within 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to those booked on misdemeanor charges. These differences are significant at the 95% threshold. Among those released during the six weeks after March 16, however, there are no significant differences in 30-, 60-, or 90-day rebooking rates for those booked on felony charges, relative to those booked on misdemeanor charges.

FIGURE 26

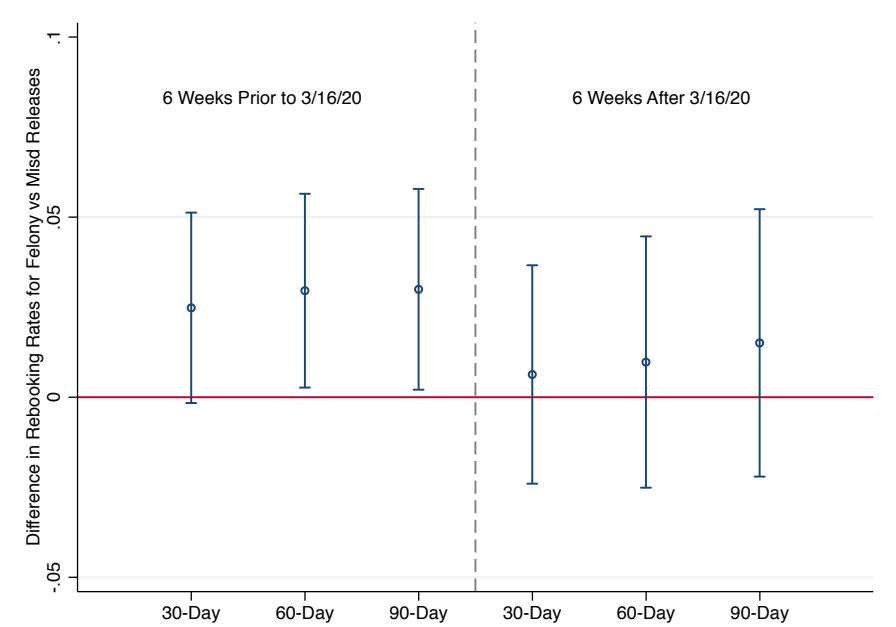
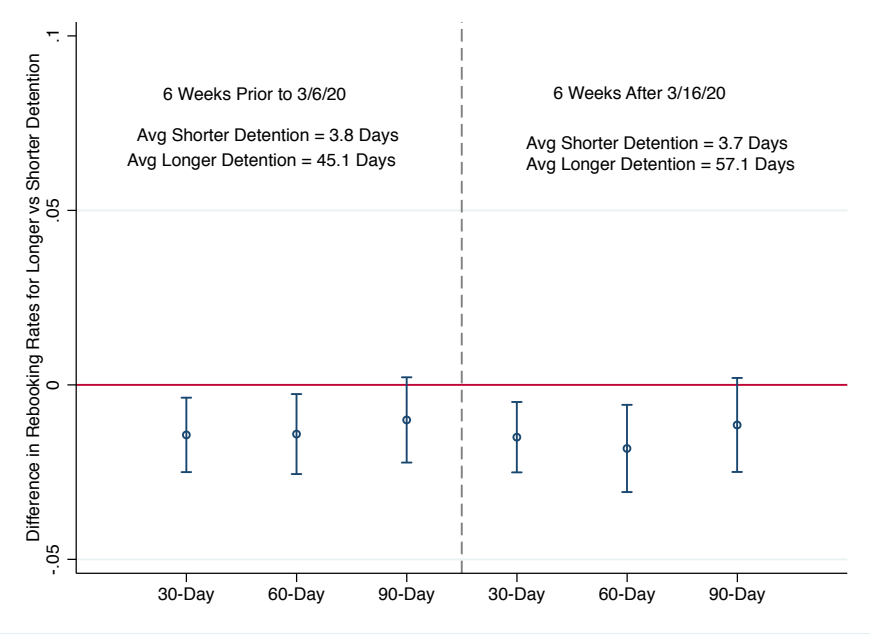


Figure 19 reports that average detention duration among those released during the week just prior to March 16 was 14.6 days. Figure 27 reports estimates of the within-facility difference in weekly rebooking rates for those released after detentions of 15 days or more, relative to those released after detentions of less than 15 days, for the six weeks before and after March 16. Among those released during the six weeks prior to March 16, the mean detention duration for those released after detentions of 15 days or more was 45.1 days, while the mean detention duration for those released after detentions of less than 15 days was 3.8 days. Among those released during the six weeks after March 16, the mean detention duration for those released after detentions of 15 days or more was 57.1 days, and the mean detention duration for those released after detentions of less than 15 days was 3.7 days. All estimates include fixed effects for both facility and week, and cluster standard errors on facilities.

FIGURE 27



Both before and after March 16, those released after longer detention durations were about 2 percentage points less likely to be rebooked after 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to those released after shorter detention durations. These differences are significant at the 95% threshold.

These estimates indicate that people released after March 16 who had been booked on felony charges were no more likely to be rebooked within 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to people released after March 16 who had been booked on misdemeanor charges. People released after March 16 who had served longer periods of detention were less likely to be rebooked within 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to those released after March 16 who had served shorter periods of detention. These estimates may help to explain why rebooking rates did not increase immediately after March 16, despite immediate changes in the characteristics of those released.

Discussion

The estimates reported here indicate that, beginning just after March 16, jails released people who were different from those released just before March 16. By the second week after March 16, those released from county jails were on average 34.3% more likely to have been booked on felony charges, and had been detained for 71.3% longer, relative to individuals released during the week just prior to March 16. These differences in the characteristics of those released persisted until July 20, the end of the period of observation.

Despite these differences in the characteristics of those released by county jails, we see no differences in 30-, 60-, or 90-day day rebooking rates for those released within a window of two weeks after March 16, relative to those released during the week just prior to March 16. More generally, rebooking rates for people released after March 16 remained below the rebooking rates for individuals released prior to March 16, across all samples examined.

Examination of the relationship between characteristics of people in jail and rebooking rates further indicates that, although individuals released during the six weeks prior to March 16 who had been booked on felony charges were slightly more likely to be rebooked within 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to people released from the same facility during the same period who had been booked on misdemeanor charges, these differences in rebooking rates disappeared during the 6-week period after March 16. Both before and after March 16, people released after longer than average periods of detention were less likely to be rebooked after 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to individuals released after shorter than average periods of detention.

The estimates reported here may support further jail population reductions. As reported in Figure 13, the volume of releases dropped steeply after March 16, and by mid-July was still on average only 50% of the volume of pre-pandemic releases. Yet people released after March 16 were no more likely to be rebooked after 30, 60, or 90 days, relative to those released prior to March 16. Additional releases may not increase the total volume of rebooking beyond pre-pandemic levels.

Rebooking rates may change, however, as conditions change. Continued tracking of releases and rebooking rates will provide jurisdictions with real-time estimates of the impacts of their detention policies on public safety.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Representativeness of the Public Safety Lab Jail Sample

	Population	Sample
Avg Facility Capacity	285	303
Avg County Population	104, 468	121, 330
Avg County Proportion Black	0.09	0.12***
Avg County Proportion White	0.83	0.81**
Avg County Proportion Hispanic	0.10	0.10
Avg County Proportion Urban	0.41	0.52***
Avg County Median Family Income	$64,068	$65,020
Facility N	3162	375
County N	3143	366

Data Sources: 2019 American Community Survey, 2013 BJS Census of Jails. ** p < .05, *** p < .01, reporting the significance of differences in means between population and sample.

Table 2: Regional Variation in Jail Population Decreases

	Total Population (2020-03-16)	Total Population (2020-05-02)	Percent Change in Population	Number of Facilities
Midwest	17211	11522	-33.1%	107
Northeast	6812	4890	-28.2%	26
South	41489	30969	-25.4%	170
West	18799	11538	-38.6%	72

Table 3: Largest Decreases in Jail Populations, Jails > 242 people 3/16/20

State	County	Total Population (2020-03-16)	Total Population (2020-05-02)	Percent Change in Population
OR	Clackamas	420	141	-66.4%
AR	White	294	101	-65.6%
AR	Faulkner	453	178	-60.7%
WA	Snohomish	703	336	-52.2%
WA	Whatcom	261	130	-50.2%
WA	Skagit	265	132	-50.2%
AR	Washington	676	340	-49.7%
CO	Jefferson	1090	573	-47.4%
IA	Scott	425	226	-46.8%
WA	Yakima	895	478	-46.6%

Table 4: Smallest Decreases in Jail Populations, Jails > 242 People 3/16/20

State	County	Total Population (2020-03-16)	Total Population (2020-05-02)	Percent Change in Population
FL	Broward	1693	1543	-8.9%
TN	Shelby	1727	1558	-9.8%
NC	Wake	1237	1103	-10.8%
LA	St. Charles	464	410	-11.6%
MS	Kemper	381	336	-11.8%
FL	St. Johns	454	398	-12.3%
FL	Walton	433	378	-12.7%
WI	Brown	722	626	-13.3%
FL	Clay	413	357	-13.6%
TX	Tom Green	383	330	-13.8%

As reported in Figures 4 and 5, using the subset of jails that consistently report whether a booking charge was a misdemeanor or a felony, as jail populations decreased the share of people booked on at least one felony charge increased, while the share of individuals booked on only misdemeanor charges decreased.[18] During the week just prior to March 16, on average 65% of people in these jails had been booked on at least one felony charge, and 20% had been booked on at least one misdemeanor but no felony charges. The average proportion of people held on felonies began to increase just after March 16, while the average proportion of those held on misdemeanor charges began to decrease just after March 16. By eight weeks after March 16, the proportion of people held on felonies had increased by 8 percentage points relative to the baseline week, or by 12%, while the proportion of those held on misdemeanor charge had fallen by 5 percentage points, or by 25%. Proportions of people held on felony (misdemeanor) charges have since remained above (below) baseline levels.

Figure 4

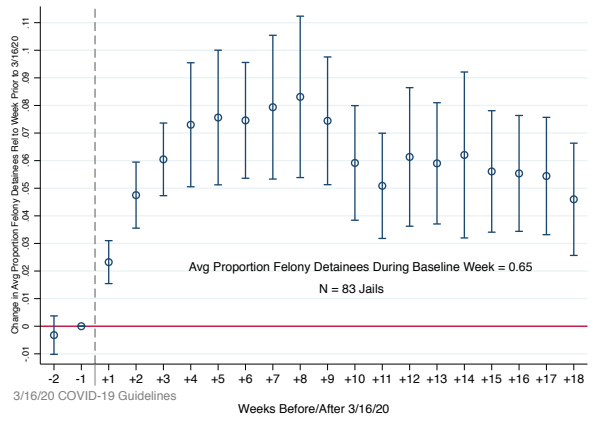
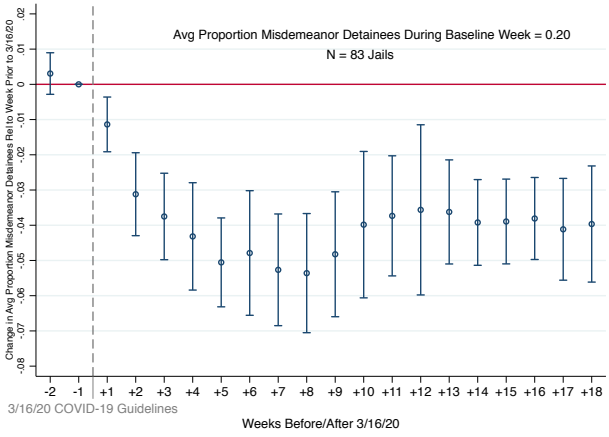


Figure 5

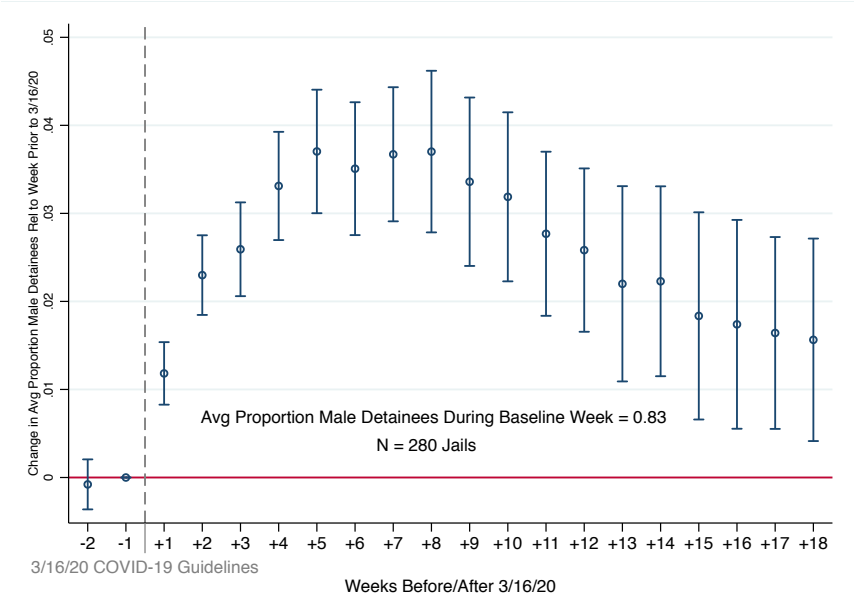


As reported in Figure 6, using the subset of jails that consistently report people's gender, as jail populations decreased the share of males among those detained increased. During the week just prior to March 16, on average 83% of people in this sample were male. That proportion began to rise immediately after March 16. By eight weeks after March 16, the proportion of males among those detained had increased by almost 4 percentage points

[18] The individual-level data being collected by the Public Safety Lab also contain detailed charge, hold, and disposition information in the form of free text fields. In the coming months the Public Safety Lab team will be parsing these text fields to extract structured data.

relative to the baseline week, or by about 5%. The proportion of males among those detained has since remained above baseline levels.

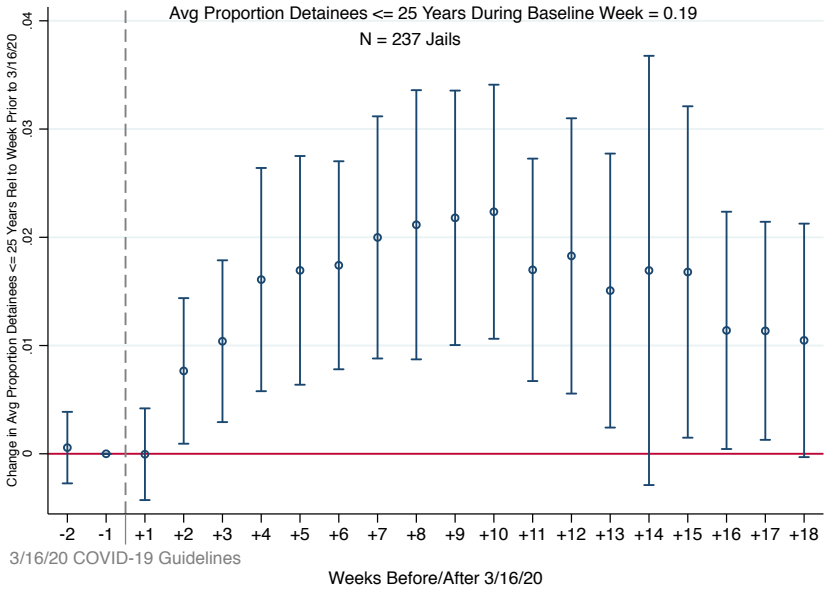
Figure 6



As reported in Figure 7, for the subset of jails that consistently report the age of those detained, as jail populations decreased the share of young people among those detained increased. During the week just prior to March 16, on average 19.2% of people in this sample were less than or equal to 25 years old, 36.3% of people were 26 - 35 years old, and 44.8% were 36 years or older.

The average proportion of jailed individuals less than or equal to 25 years old began to rise after March 16. By eight weeks after March 16, the proportion of young people among those detained had increased by 2.2 percentage points relative to the baseline week, or by 11.5%. The proportion of young people among those detained has since remained above baseline levels. There were no changes in the proportions of jailed individuals 26 - 35 years old, or 36 years or older, that were significant at the 95% threshold.

Figure 7



Finally, as reported in Figures 8 and 9 for the subset of jails that consistently report race/ethnicity, as jail populations decreased the share of white people among those detained decreased while the share of Black individuals among those detained increased.[19] During the week just prior to March 16, on average 66.9% of people in this sample were white, 27.6% were Black, and 3.3% were Hispanic. The proportion of white people among those detained began to decrease after March 16. By eight weeks after March 16, the proportion of white people among those detained had decreased by 2 percentage points relative to the baseline week, or by 3%. The proportion of white individuals among those detained has since remained below baseline levels. The proportion of Black people among those detained began to increase after March 16. By 8 weeks after March 16, the proportion of Black people in jail had increased by 1.6 percentage points relative to the baseline week, or by 5.8%. The proportion of Black individuals among those detained has since remained above baseline levels. There were no changes in the proportion of Hispanic people in jail that were significant at the 95% threshold.

[19] We code a jailed individual as white if the person is identified as white but not Black or Hispanic; as Black if the person is identified as Black, and as Hispanic if the individual is identified as Hispanic but not Black. Other race/ethnicity categories are present but in much smaller numbers.

Figure 8

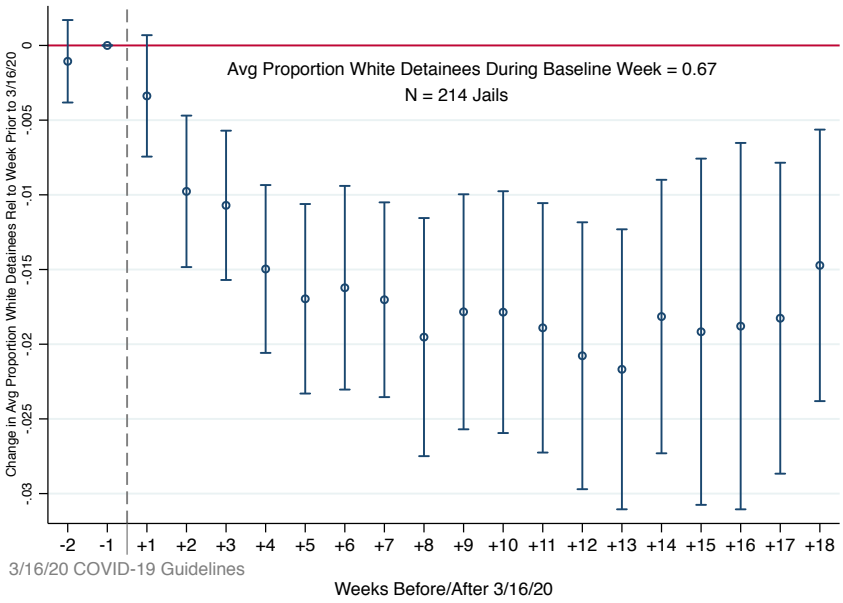
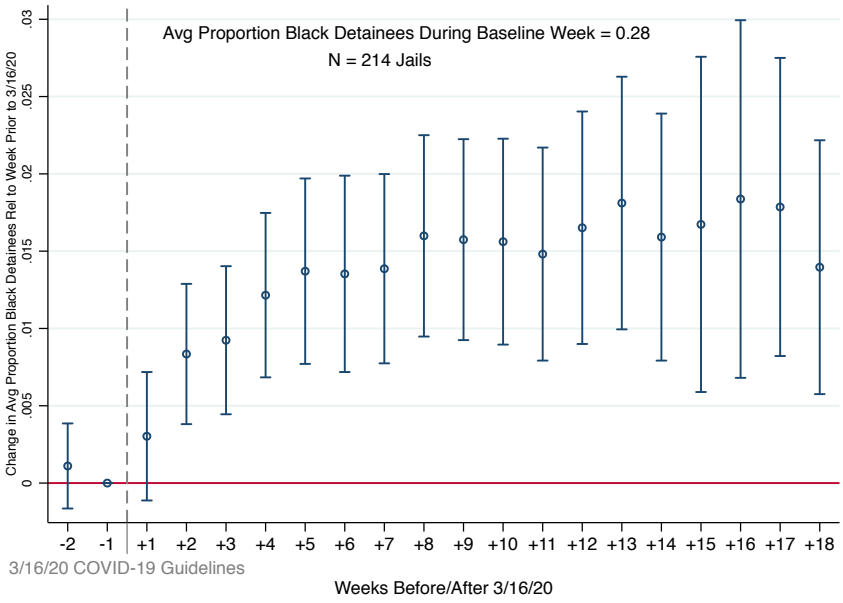
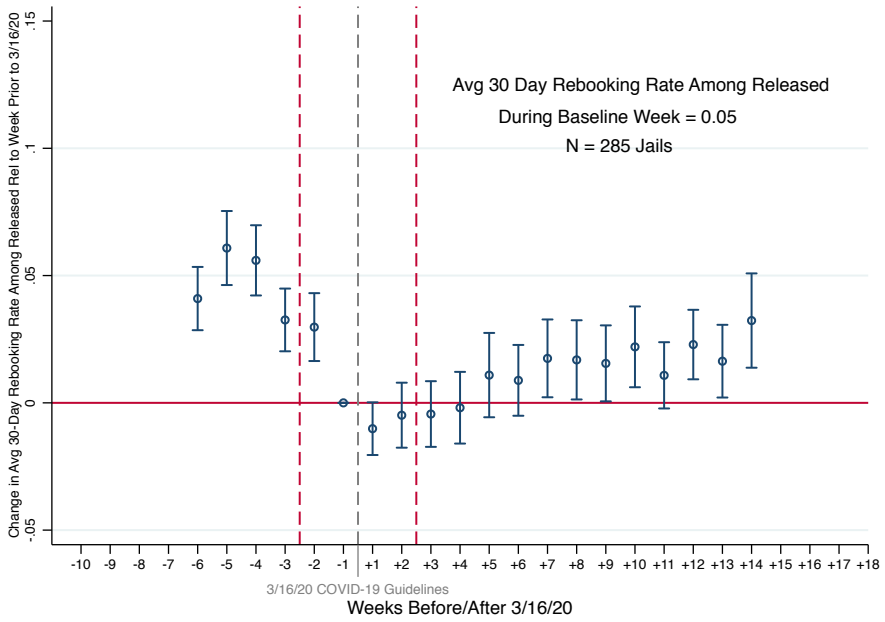
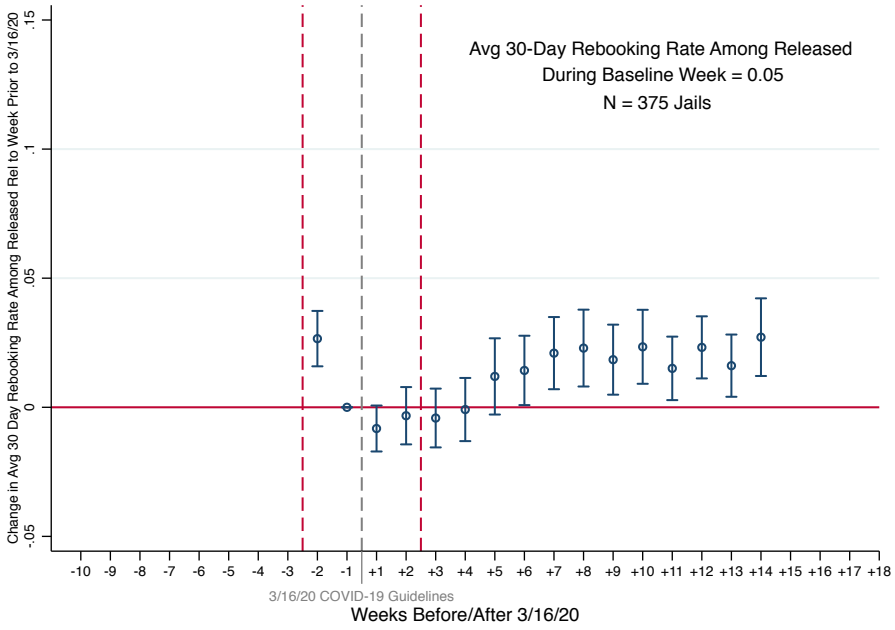


Figure 9

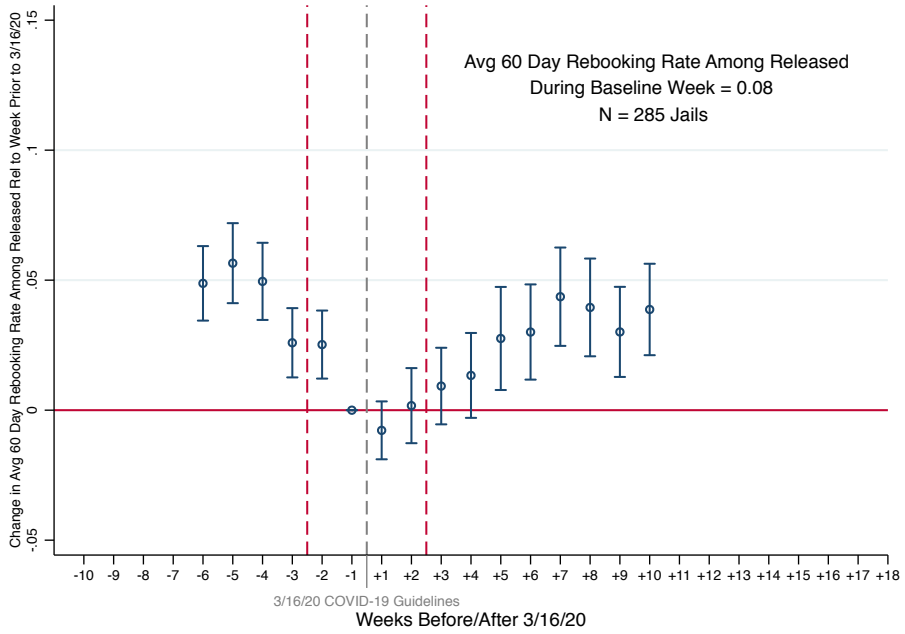


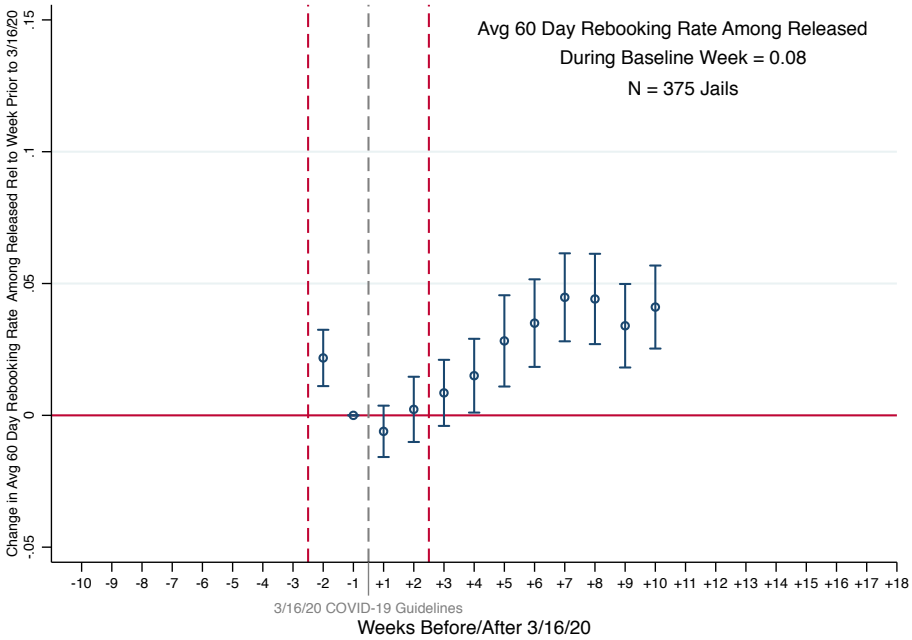
30 Day Rebooking Rates, 285 Jail and 375 Jail Samples





60 Day Rebooking Rates, 285 Jail and 375 Jail Samples





90 Day Rebooking Rates, 285 Jail and 375 Jail Samples