Sober Living Homes in the Fourth Judicial District: The Efficacy of Sober Living Facilities and How to Better Support Individuals with a Substance Use Disorder in the Recovery Court System

Capstone Description
- Seeks to analyze the efficacy of sober living facilities in the Fourth Judicial District
- Is a particular sober living facility likely to increase or decrease the likelihood of a defendant graduating the Recovery Court program?
- Or are all sober living facilities just as effective at aiding Recovery Court defendants?

Organizational Context
- August 2016: Magistrate Daphne Burlingame becomes the presiding official of the Fourth Judicial District Recovery Court
- Recovery Court exists to aid individuals with a substance use disorder on their path to addiction recovery during their time in the judicial system

Professional Background
- “Drug Treatment” courts started in Miami, FL in 1989
- Sober living homes evolved out of the traditional “halfway house” concept, which slowly transitions recently released inmates back into society
- Most importantly, sober living facilities provide individual therapy, life skills classes, job placement assistance, and a sober, supportive place to live during recovery

Methods of Study
- Data is collected when a defendant enters the Recovery Court program and collects all demographic information
- 284 participants from May 2015 to December 2019
- “Success” rates include defendants who graduated the program with or without continued probation
- “Failure” rates encompass all defendants who did not successfully graduate, for a multitude of reasons

Findings
- Of the 284 total subjects, 188 (66.20%) did not reside in Sober Living homes while 96 (33.80%) did
- There are 9.17% more women residing in sober living homes than women who live elsewhere, which can be attributed to the existence of several Sober Living homes or facilities that only cater to women
- The calculated success rate for Recovery Court defendants that resided in Sober Living homes was 22.34% (see Figure 1)
- For all 188 defendants outside of Sober Living facilities, the overall success rate was 36.61%, which is nearly 15% higher
- 8 sober living facilities in the El Paso and Teller County region were represented in this study (see Figure 2)
- The success rate for those who reside in sober living facilities (22.34%) is much lower than the success rate for those who are classified as Homeless (41.18%)

Recommendations
- Expand the data collection within the Recovery Court, and reverify all demographic information upon the completion of each phase to maintain a more robust, accurate database for future research
- Expanded data collection would also allow for tracking of what makes participants successful
- Would also allow the reinforcement or rescinding of these particular study findings
- Conduct a deep analysis of the Sober Living facilities in El Paso and Teller counties, to define what characteristics of recovery each facility provides
- Develop a screening tool to determine the housing needs of new Recovery Court participants
- Once the facilities have been analyzed, and the screening tool implemented, it’d be possible to steer defendants to a sober living facility that would be conducive to their specific needs and aid in their recovery and rehabilitation