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Behind Bars in Binghamton: Exploring the Incarceration Rate of Broome County

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***Behind Bars in
Binghamton:
Exploring Incarceration
in Broome County***

PRESENTER:
Jackson Hengsterman

BACKGROUND

Broome County has the highest incarceration rate in New York State, at 39 people incarcerated per 10,000 residents. One of the main reasons why incarceration is such a pressing issue for the county is because it impacts many people in the community and being incarcerated can effectively ruin somebody's life. **Why does Broome County have the highest incarceration rate in New York State?**

METHODS

- 1. Visited Broome County jail multiple times.
- 2. Spoke with researchers, activists, and inmates.
- 3. Examined trends from county incarceration data

RESULTS

From my visits to Broome County Jail and my research surrounding the Jail, I was able to conclude that Broome County’s high incarceration rate can be attributed to the overwhelming amount of drug users and people with mental health issues in the county, paired with insufficient funding to treat these issues. Instead of getting the help they need, these struggling populations are routinely jailed as an alternative.



Broome County’s incarceration rate is the highest in New York state

due to high levels of drug use, poverty, and mental health issues

among the populations most frequently arrested.

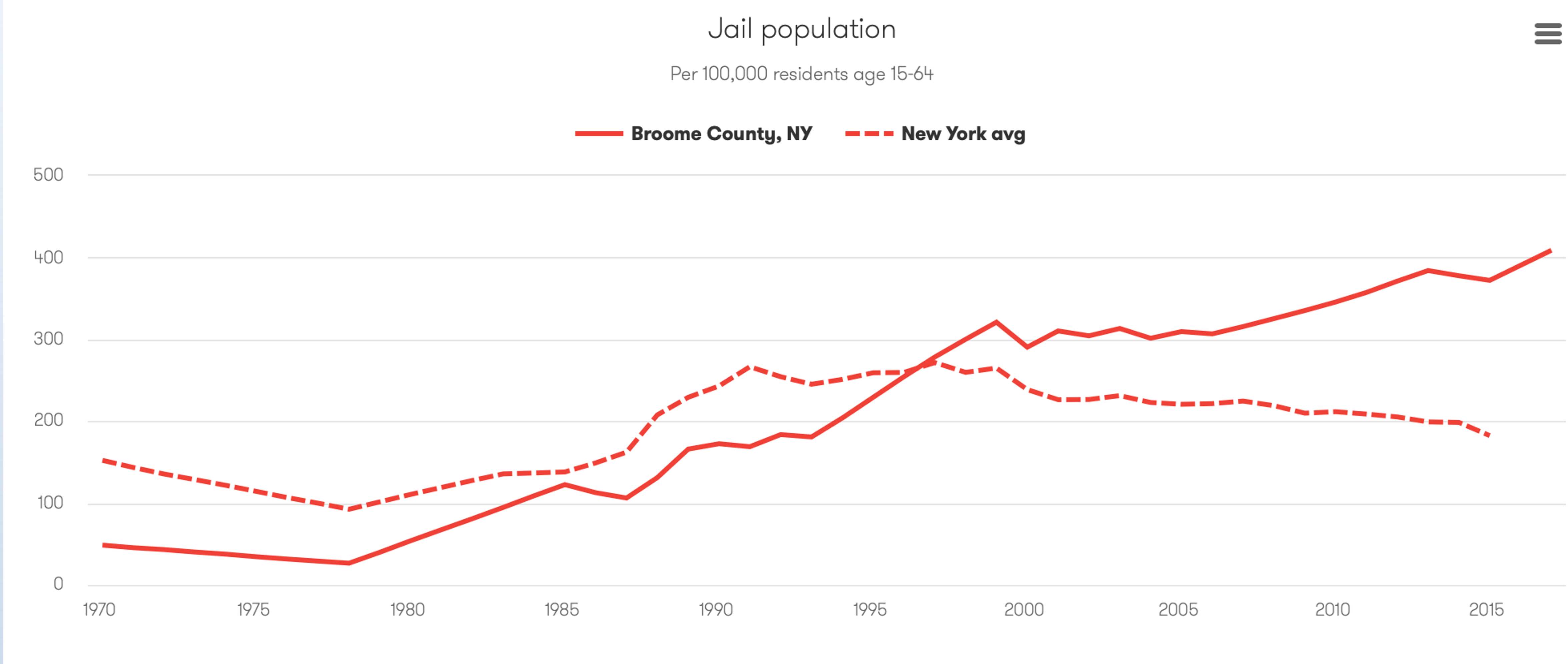


Figure #1: As the average incarceration rates across New York State has been falling for the past decade, the incarceration rate in Broome County has been steadily climbing.

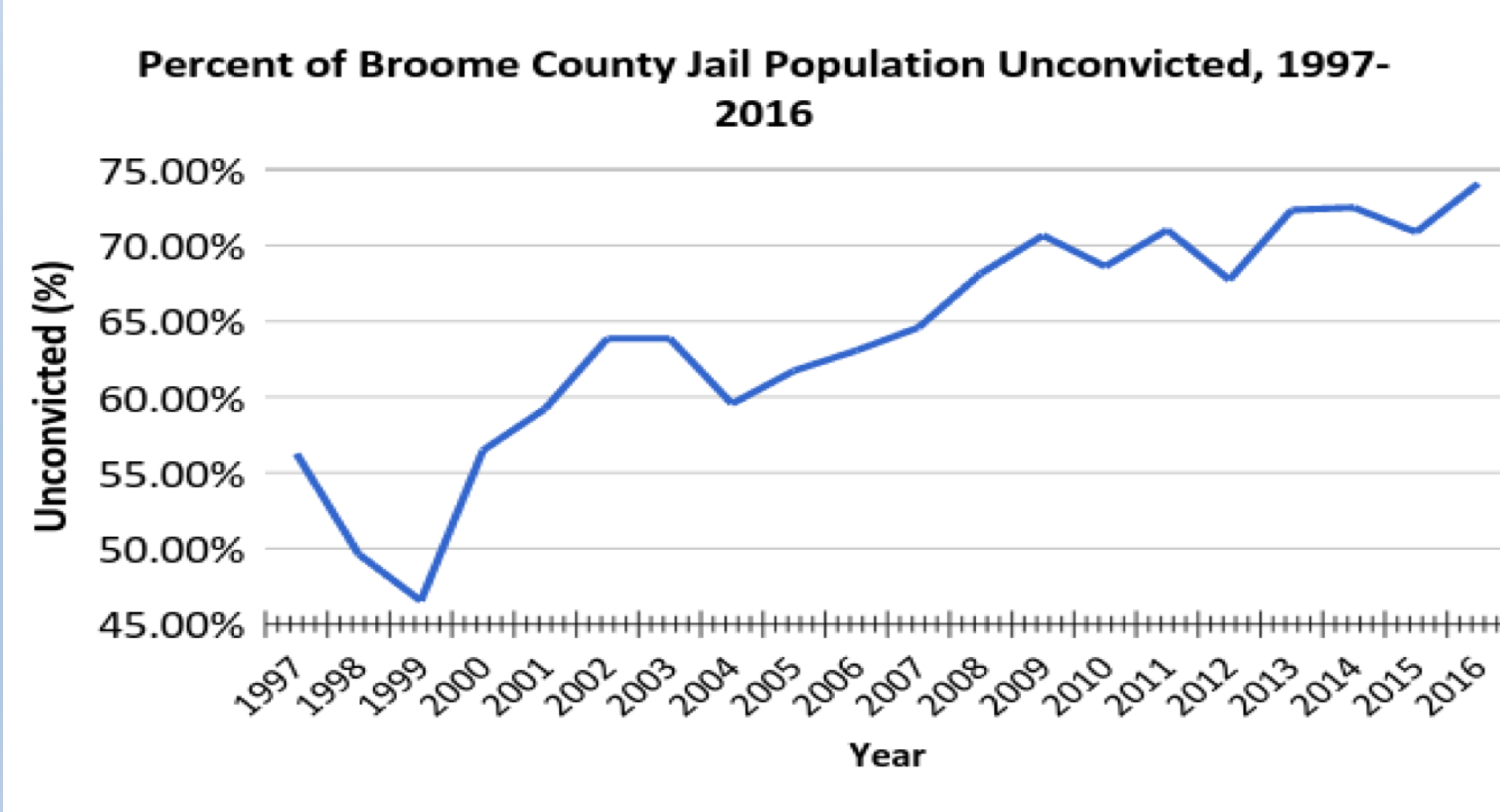


Figure #2: The vast majority of people incarcerated in Broome County have not been convicted of a crime. Latest numbers from Broome County show that, as of 1/15/2020, 334 out of 441 inmates in Broome County Jail were **not sentenced**.

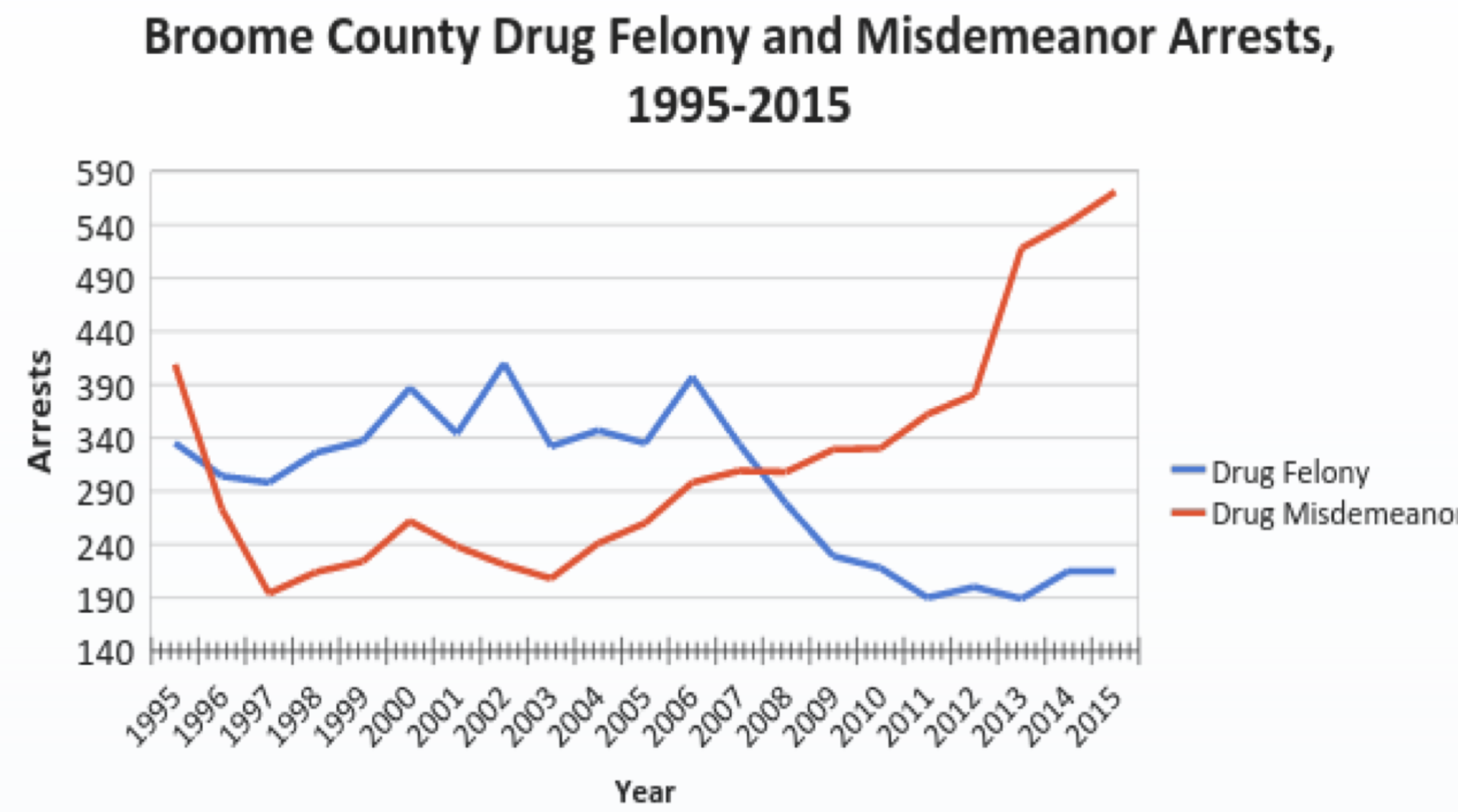


Figure #3: There has been a sharp increase in the amount of arrests for drug misdemeanors (such as possession), making drug charges one of the leading causes for incarceration in Broome County.

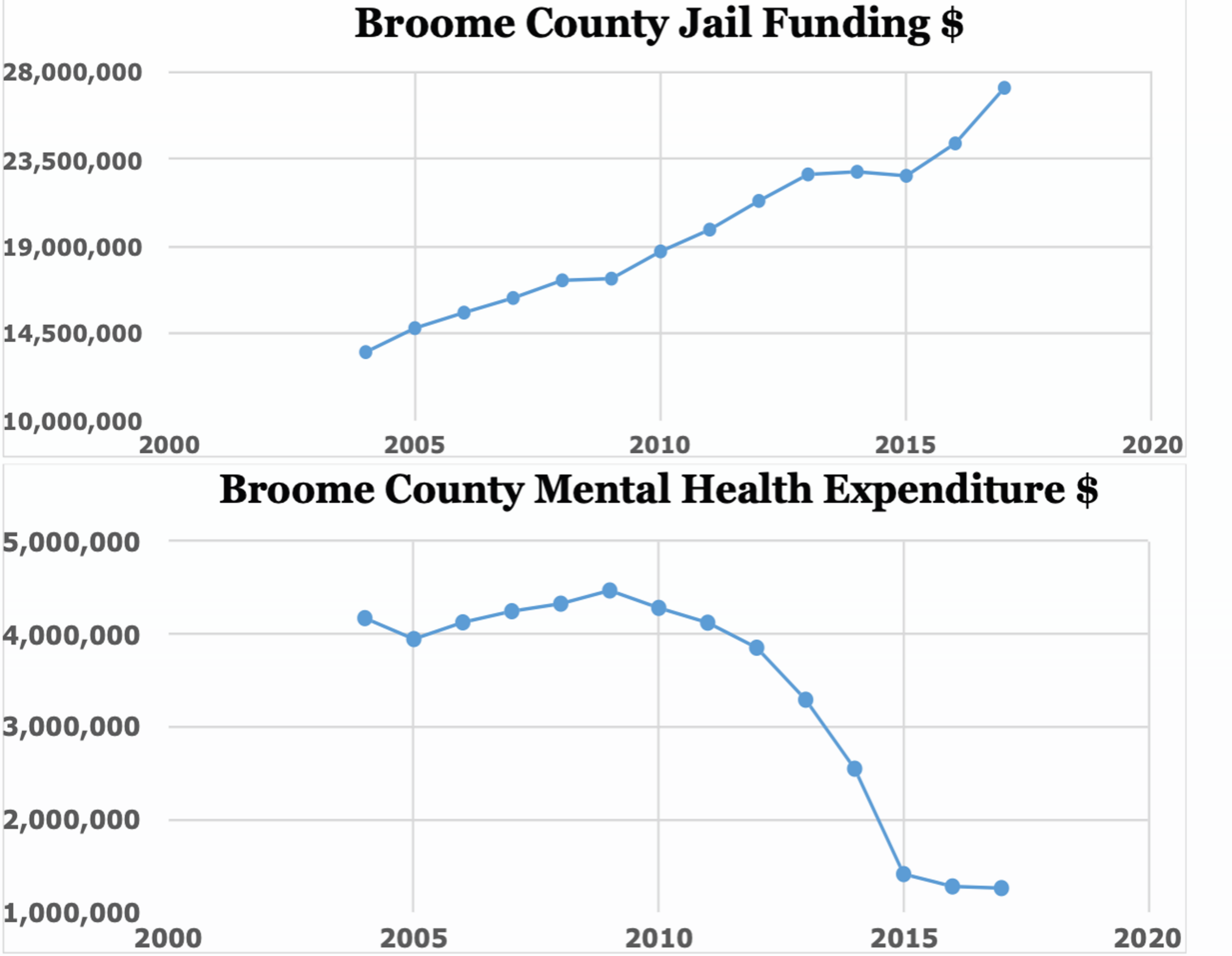


Figure #4: As Broome County has steadily increased the Sheriff’s budget (\$29 million in 2020), the county budget for mental heath services has been decreasing (\$1.1 million in 2020).

REFERENCES

CRIMINALJUSTICE.NY.GOV,
GOBROOMECOUNTY.COM,
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