

RECOMMENDATIONS

The intent of the Summit was to come to some recommendations that all community corrections stakeholders could agree on regarding six issues. The enclosed will be forwarded to the Departments of Public Safety and Corrections and State Judicial to be considered in future planning efforts.



COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS SUMMIT

July 2005

Thanks to all who planned, helped, attended and participated!

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SUMMIT DISCUSSION ISSUE

INTENSIVE RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT

Problem

Intensive Residential Treatment bed use is causing placement backlog.

Recommendations

1. That all referrals for IRT (Intensive Residential Treatment) bed placement are assessed at level 5 treatment (the highest) level of treatment need) unless there is an approved clinical override with supporting documentation.
2. That the standardized assessment tool developed by the Division of Criminal Justice be designated as the assessment tool of choice to be used for all referrals to the IRT programs.
3. That the "Interagency Committee" develop an abbreviated training program for all decision-makers in the referral process (judges, Department of Corrections case managers, Parole Board, community corrections boards and their screening committees) who request IRT treatment as a condition of community corrections placement. (To identify *how, when, why and in what circumstances* to make a referral for IRT placement)
4. That assessment using the Division of Criminal Justice assessment tool is timely and updated regularly.
 - The assessment needs to be completed with the Presentence Investigation Report and provided for the decision-makers.
 - A subsequent assessment should be completed at intake to the IRT and community corrections facilities with an update at 6 month intervals.
5. That the Department of Corrections and Division of Criminal Justice, working with the programs and boards that have the challenge of empty beds in the "wrong" places, craft a solution that allows the maximum use of the IRT resources.

Presently, in most cases, the demand for IRT treatment service is greater than the resources available. However, some IRT programs consistently have empty beds because of placement approval processing problems. Until these specific local problems are addressed, it will be hard to justify to the legislature the need for additional funding for IRT service.

6. That the providers work together to develop ideas and opportunities to identify alternative treatment options to enhance availability of drug treatment services if it is unlikely that additional IRT resources will be funded.



SUMMIT DISCUSSION ISSUE



Problem *Inconsistent interpretation of service requirements is causing variations in service delivery.*

Recommendations

1. To recognize and support the variety and diversity of our Statewide programming as an asset of community corrections.
2. To educate State legislators, auditors, local citizenry, and the media on how various service providers and other stakeholders meet the existing standards through programs unique to each community. And to identify for them how smaller jurisdictions cope with limited access to the range of services available in larger jurisdictions.
3. To proactively develop a protocol/blueprint for the use of future auditors that assists them in evaluating the common elements of our varied service delivery methods.
 - a. To ask the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council to assist in the development of this draft protocol as a priority for the Council's work timetable.
 - b. To ask the Governor's Advisory Council to allow sufficient time for the review and comment on the draft protocol by all stakeholders (three to six months).
 - c. To ask Ray Slaughter, at his discretion, to contact Joanne Hill (Legislative Audit Team Director) to inform her of the development of the protocol and request the assistance of her office.
 - d. To include at a minimum the following sources in the development of the protocol:
 - The language and intent of the controlling Statute;
 - The language used in defining program and board service responsibilities in the existing State contracts and subcontracts;
4. To modify Exhibit A requirements that the service providers submit each year before their contracts are approved to include better definitions of how the provider and program plan to meet the applicable standards.
 - Also, consider requiring an Exhibit A to the State's contract with the community corrections boards that has the boards identifying how they will comply with their requirements of the State's contract.
 - Incorporate the language and intent of existing State and local policies, procedures and standards that define service expectations; and,
 - Include a simplified matrix or menu of providers/programs and their services. (Consider using the community corrections DVD that is under development as a guide to identify existing services.)

SUMMIT DISCUSSION ISSUE

OFFENDER FUND MANAGEMENT

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Problem

*Disparity in the
management
of offender funds and
employment assistance.*

Recommendations

Management of Offender Funds

1. That regardless of whether a program directly manages offender funds or not, all service providers should be required to comply with the standards for
 - a. monitoring and reporting monthly revenue and expenditures in accordance with a written budget that is developed and reviewed by the offender and signed by both case manager and the offender; and,
 - b. provide documentation that the programs use standard, generally accepted accounting practices to manage client funds. (Note this could be accomplished by including the client fund management in the services provider's recurring fiscal audit.)
2. That a request be made that the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council appoint a committee at their meeting (September 2005) charged with developing a formula to be used by all programs for distribution of offender funds.
 - The formula should give priority to restitution and child support.
 - Diversion and transition clients should be subject to the same formula.
 - The formula should consider client income level, treatment needs, and public safety needs.
3. That standard data collection elements and outcome measures be adopted by the Division of Criminal Justice for the documentation of offender fund management compliance.

Employment Assistance

1. That a recommendation be made to the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council to include "minimally employable" or "unemployable offenders" in "Special Needs Population" offenders.
 - Define characteristics of "minimally employable" and "unemployable" offenders using experts in the vocational fields to be used to develop alternative treatment plans (i.e., assist the offender in applying for unemployment compensation, social security, subsidized housing, disability assistance, and other federal and State assistance programs.).
2. That evidence-based protocols for assessing offender employment capacities, (i.e., education, mental health, skill level, etc.) be identified. Select a common assessment tool to be used by service providers to evaluate all offenders in the State's community corrections programs and require the preparation of vocational plans that address the assessed employment needs.
 - a. Ensure that diversion and transition offenders receive same assessments and services.
 - b. Ensure that documentation in offender files includes evidence of employment assessment, employment preparation, and placement assistance in compliance with State standards. (Note if this information is not recorded in the program's client file, it will be assumed that it did not happen.)
 - c. Ensure that case managers update client files to include vocational plan documentation and monthly progress updates.
3. That providers be required to document efforts to educate local employers on the value of hiring community corrections supervised offenders and identify employment placement opportunities that have been developed.



SUMMIT DISCUSSION ISSUE



Problem

Identifying and standardizing escape prevention measures and response to escapes.

Recommendations

Prevention

1. To identify or develop a risk analysis tool to evaluate client escape probability. The resulting evaluation should identify support services that would assist in preventing escape. When validated and implemented, require the use of this risk tool for all offenders entering a program with corresponding case management plans that address risk factors.
2. For the Division of Criminal Justice to initiate a Statewide program evaluation of effective deterrents to escape. Best practices should be documented for all service providers and boards with a recommendation that they be implemented in all community corrections jurisdictions.
3. That programs brief all new placements on the intended response to escape, the consequences they will face, and how they can avoid further punitive sanctions if they exceed deadlines which would require the providers to initiate escape response procedures. This should be documented in the client's case file.

Response

1. To test pilot programs on escape response in various jurisdictions. Evaluation of this effort should document effectiveness in recapture and identify the costs to all participants.
2. That service providers and State agencies work collaboratively with local law enforcement to develop an escape response and apprehension plan that would become a standard for all jurisdictions.
 - Seek Intergovernmental Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding with judicial and Corrections Departments to implement the pilot programs identified above.
3. That service providers, probation, and parole staff identify high profile offenders (i.e., escapees who, because of the nature of their offense, their risk of new crimes, or threat to former victims, would cause increased public concern) to law enforcement as part of the escape notification process.
4. That service providers interview recovered escapees to collect and document information on escapee habits including potential escape locations, common associates, and activities.
 - That service providers communicate information to probation/parole/law enforcement staff participating in the escape response and recovery efforts on client habits, friends, family and frequented locations.



SUMMIT DISCUSSION ISSUE

INCREASE IN PLACEMENTS TO COMMUNITY

Problem

The Statewide community corrections system is finding it difficult to respond to the legislature's expectation that we assist in controlling the prison costs by placing more offenders in community corrections.

Recommendations

1. To encourage community corrections boards and service providers to develop strategies to help each other respond to the need for more services and make maximum use of all the available beds (e. g., sharing special needs programs, establishing agreements that reduce placement processing delays for offenders sentenced in two jurisdictions, providing for client exchange to address special needs, etc.)
2. To address deficiencies within the Department of Corrections referral system by:
 - a. educating the boards, service providers, and justice system workers on the Department of Corrections referral process and seeking recommendations for efficiency improvements;
 - b. making the referral process more "user friendly" (e.g., evenly distributing the referrals over the year, easier access to offender information, identification of special offender needs, etc.)
 - c. encouraging the boards, service providers, and Department of Corrections to work together to provide clear standardized information for all decision-makers.
 - d. encouraging Department of Corrections to expedite the placement of approved referrals.
3. To plan for resource allocation, boards, service providers and Department of Corrections staff to collect needed data to predict and plan for resource demands in the future (e.g., using intake and release trends predicting bed space need by sentencing and paroling jurisdictions, etc.).
4. To improve risk and needs analysis and documentation to help boards and service providers identify appropriateness for community placement and treatment planning.
5. To explore whether start-up money or low-cost loans are available from the State or other sources for new facilities and the expansion of existing facilities and to explore government assistance in controlling the costs of vendor liability coverage.
6. To explore improving the logistics of bed space use (e.g., reducing the release and transportation time for approved placements, establishing standards for period of residential placement, using technology to increase processing volume and expand placement resources, etc.)



INFORMATIONAL DATA SYSTEM

SUMMIT DISCUSSION ISSUE

Problem

Information on the operations of community corrections is difficult to collect quickly, not standardized for easy interpretation, and frequently not maintained in compatible formats (computer software, hardware and data transmission methods).

Recommendations

1. As a long-term solution, develop an integrated State information system starting with the courts to include Presentence Investigation Report, Level of Service Inventory and Sex Offender Assessment, community corrections information, parole, etc. This system should contain defendant/offender information that follows them from their entry to their exit from the justice system and eliminates the need for repetitive data entry at each stage of the process.
2. As a short-term solution, seek the assistance of the Governor's Advisory Council in developing a plan to design and implement a practical data system for community corrections, which meets most of the users needs.
 - Consider using an internet based system
 - Begin by creating an electronic admission and termination data base
 - System development:
 - a. Define an "ideal" information system which benefits all users (i.e., State agencies, service providers, and boards) and could be available to all users to follow an offender through community corrections. Use this as a blueprint to develop an actual information system.
 - b. Prioritize information/data needs and purposes for each user group using the "ideal" system.
 - c. Research database development in other states similar to the "ideal system."
 - d. Explore electronic data transfer from existing information systems including the service providers.
 - e. Evaluate existing date base sources for possible compatibility with the "ideal system's" ease of use, accessibility, and security (i.e., Judicial's ICON/Eclipse to include community corrections information for diversion clients and Department of Corrections' DCIS for transition clients).
 - Limit data base access to the courts, probation, Department of Corrections, community corrections service providers, Division of Criminal Justice, and local boards.
 - Develop a Memorandum of Understanding for all users that identifies responsibilities and commitments for using the database.