



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

**Department of
Corrections**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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April 9, 2014

The Honorable Wes Keller
Alaska State House of Representatives
State Capitol, Rm. 118
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Keller:

During the April 4, 2014 hearing on SB 64 Omnibus Crime/Corrections Bill, Representative Gruenberg expressed concern over the amount of support given to inmates upon release. The Department of Corrections (Department) understands that inmates cannot be successful in the community unless they have developed the necessary skills and support systems. Therefore, the Department begins preparing inmates for release as soon as they are incarcerated and continues to connect individuals with support systems long after release.

The process of reintegrating inmates back into the community begins as soon as they are incarcerated. Felons who are sentenced to 45 days or more are given an in depth risk-needs assessment so the Department can address any substance abuse treatment or educational needs. Further, inmates who are employed during incarceration have a portion of their wages deposited into a mandatory savings account. The funds in this account are retained for the primary purpose of being available to the individual upon release.

As discussed in my letter of April 2, 2014, the Department offers numerous institutional substance abuse, educational, and vocational programs which help prepare inmates for reentry. As an inmate gets closer to their release date, the Department also offers a specific reentry course, reentry manual, and a community resource guide. These materials offer inmates guidance on how to reestablish themselves as functioning members of society. They include information on various topics such as obtaining a state identification card and employment.

Additionally, institutional probation officers work with sentenced felons before release to develop offender management plans. Offender management plans help these inmates prepare for release by identifying resources in the community that will address their

individual needs. For inmates with medical and mental health issues, the Department's medical social worker will set up follow up doctor's appointments in the community to ensure continuity of medical care. The Department also participates in the Assess, Plan, Identify, and Coordinate (APIC) program, which assists mentally ill inmates by allowing community providers to provide care in the institution up to 90 days before release and to continue care for up to 60 days post release.

The Department relies on community providers to provide services which compliment programs offered in the institutions. For example, the Department has worked closely with the reentry centers in Anchorage, which serve as "one stop" centers where offenders can receive referrals, information, and reentry assistance. Additionally, other nonprofits have coordinated much needed peer support programs both inside and outside of the institutions. This kind of coordination between the Department and the community is crucial to promoting successful community integration.

Thank you for allowing the Department the opportunity to outline its current reentry efforts. Please let me know if you have additional questions or would like any other information.

Sincerely,



Joseph Schmidt
Commissioner