

Alaska Department of Corrections: PACE and Housing Assistance for Newly Released Prisoners

I. Substance Abuse: PACE – Probationer Accountability with Certain Enforcement

In July 2010, the Anchorage Superior Court, in collaboration with a number of criminal justice partners, started the PACE (Probationer Accountability with Certain Enforcement) pilot project modeled after Hawaii's Project HOPE.¹ Under the model, when a probationer violates probation by testing positive for drugs or alcohol or missing an appointment with the probation officer, the probationer is arrested immediately and is brought to court within two business days. During one single hearing, which would normally take at least three court hearings over a six-month period, the probationer is arraigned, counsel appointed, adjudicated on the petition to revoke probation, and sentenced to a short term of incarceration.

Data collected after Honolulu's HOPE program, started in 2004, showed that within three months, the rate of positive drug tests for probationers on HOPE dropped by half. More than half of the probationers never missed a drug test or appointment after their first warning meeting with the judge, and of those who did miss, 40 percent missed only once. A randomized study of Project HOPE found that after one year in the program, 9 percent of the HOPE probationers had not appeared for an appointment, as compared to 23 percent of the control group. Only 13 percent of the Project HOPE probationers had positive urine tests, as compared to 46 percent of the control group. Only 21 percent of the HOPE probationers had been rearrested (for any reason), compared to 47 percent of the control group.

The PACE pilot project began after Alaska criminal justice leaders studied HOPE and met Honolulu's Judge Steven Alm, its founder. PACE started out with 29 probationers in Anchorage Superior Court and will increase to 70 probationers by the end of February 2011. Three months after the Anchorage pilot project began, a preliminary report showed early results in Anchorage match the trends found with Project HOPE. The data, as of mid-October, showed the following:

- Thirteen of the 29 probationers originally assigned to PACE have gone for two months with no violations, and have had the frequency of their random urine analysis testing reduced.
- Of the probationers rearrested and sanctioned, most have only been rearrested once. Two probationers are being held on new charges, and

¹ Those partners are the Anchorage Police Department, the State Public Defender's Office, the Office of Public Advocacy, Anchorage District Attorney's Office, and the ADOC.

probation is working to get at least one other (who has failed several tests) into residential treatment.

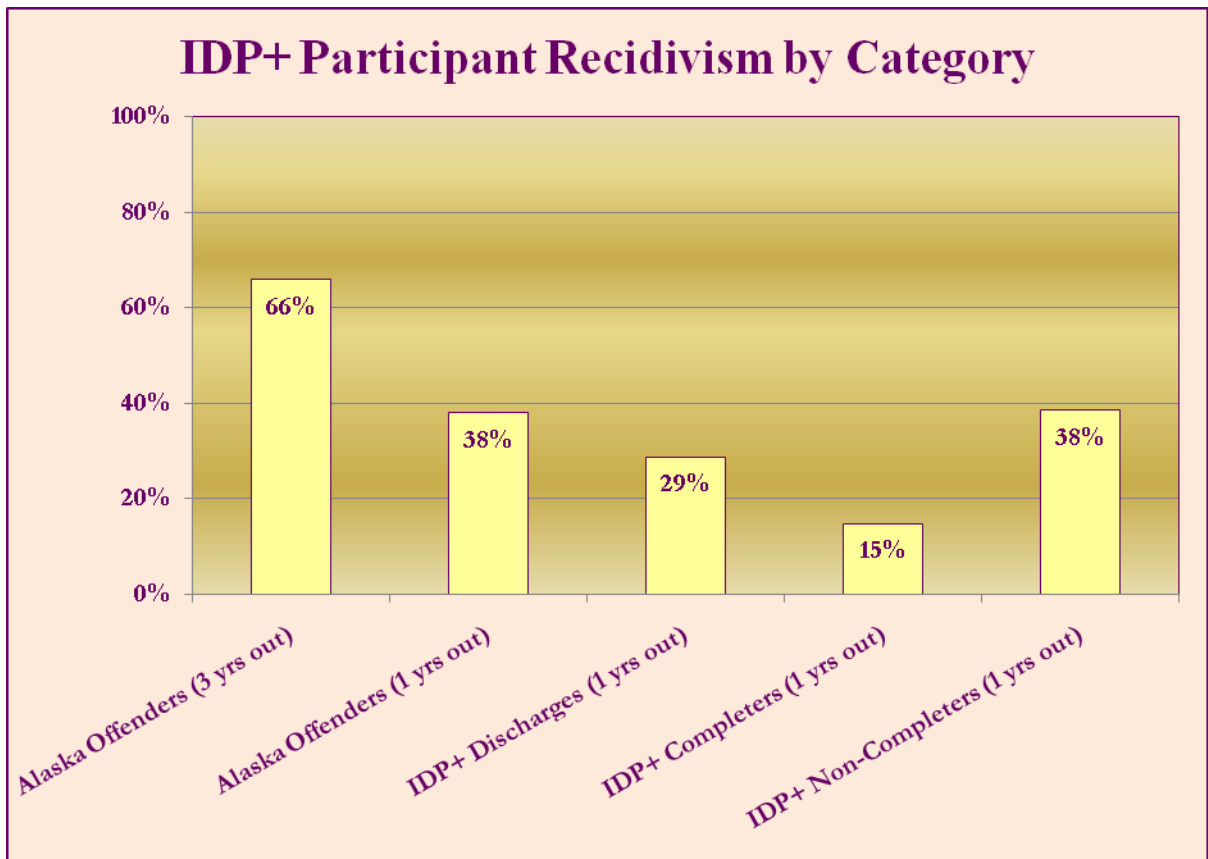
The ADOC and its collaborative partners on this project see great promise in the PACE model. Should the PACE trends continue, the goal is to expand the model to other state courts and to parolees. Significantly, Project HOPE has shown in Honolulu that 50 percent of the probationers with significant drug and alcohol problems were able to stop using drugs solely with the threat of swift and certain sanctions. Accordingly, the limited community-based substance treatment programs can then be made available to those who have demonstrated through their behavior the necessity of treatment.

II. The ADOC's Efforts to Provide Housing & other Resources to Newly Release Prisoners

A. Institutional Discharge Project Plus (IDP⁺)

IDP⁺ is a special program that targets felony prisoners with a psychotic disorder who are being released to probation or parole in Alaskan communities. An ADOC mental health clinician, in conjunction with a probation officer and other community behavioral health or other identified agency representatives, develops a treatment and monitoring plan for the releasing prisoner. The current caseload for this clinician is 77. There are also an additional 10 to 15 individuals in IDP⁺ in locations around the state at any given time. Based upon ADOC clinician experience, the caseload for a single IDP⁺ clinician should not exceed 30.

Although the IDP⁺ program as a whole has not been formally evaluated by an outside entity, ADOC internally tracks outcome data on participants. In 2008, the ADOC asked Hornby Zeller Associates to conduct a sample study (n=125) of IDP⁺ participants. The sample included individuals who were actively being monitored by the IDP⁺ program, had successfully completed the IDP⁺ program, or were discharged from the IDP⁺ program. The sample study found that of those who completed the program, 15 percent recidivated after one year. This is in comparison with the state recidivism rate of 38 percent after one year.



There are several program components that are key to a participant's success and to ensuring public safety, including but not limited to:

1. A trained mental health clinician working actively and collaboratively with probation and community service agency staff to develop, monitor, and adjust community release plans for probationers and parolees that address treatment services and appropriate housing;
2. A reduced probation caseload to compensate for individual mental health, substance abuse, and other complexities that are inherent to participants of this reentry program; and,
3. The ability to respond quickly if an individual is having problems with the release plan or if a community agency has concerns about the individual's compliance with the release plan.

B. Assess, Plan, Identify and Coordinate (APIC)

This program, based on a national evidence-based model, links offenders with mental illness reentering the Alaskan communities of Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau and the

Mat-Su Valley with needed community services to ensure public safety and success for the individual. This program is available to both felony and misdemeanor offenders who are in custody at the time of referral.

The goal of the program is to link individuals to community treatment services, and medication and to secure government benefits to which they are entitled. The APIC program has funding available to pay community agencies under an APIC contract for services up to 90 days before release for release planning and for direct treatment services up to 60 days after release with the possibility of extension in certain cases. This allows time to obtain federal Social Security Administration and Alaska Division of Public Assistance benefits if eligible, and for services to be provided at a more intense level to aid reentry. Through this program, the ADOC has succeeded in securing social security disability (primarily SSI) benefits for all ADOC applicants in this program, referring participants to needed community-based support services which has resulted in reduced recidivism rates for this population.

Although the APIC program as a whole has not been formally evaluated by an outside entity, the ADOC internally tracks outcome data on participants. In FY10, data on 143 participants in the program showed the following:

1. 100 percent of the participants had been connected to identified community treatment providers on release from an ADOC facility;
2. 89 percent of the participants had an admission for services intake within 10 days of release from an ADOC facility;
3. 55 percent of the participants were released from an ADOC facility to supervised or supported housing, and 39 percent into non-supervised housing; and,
4. As of June 30, 2010, 59 percent of those who completed the program prior to March 31, 2010 had not been re-incarcerated.

There are several program components that are essential to a participant's success and ensuring public safety, including but not limited to:

1. Having dedicated ADOC staff to assist the identified offenders develop a reentry plan;
2. Establishing connections and to identify community services prior to the offenders release;
3. Facilitating a "warm transition" or hand-off of the offender to the community service(s) provider;
4. Ensuring medication regimes for identified offenders are not disrupted during the reentry transition; and,
5. Having 60 days or more for identified cases of ADOC and case coordination to ensure the offender is connected and receiving identified community treatment services and supports.

C. DOC Discharge Incentive Grant for Housing and Related Supports

The ADOC and the DHSS/DBH coordinated Trust funds to provide transitional housing and supports to 53 individuals with complex mental disorders in FY10. Each agency managed a portion of the funds to assist these individuals to successfully transition from jail or prison to a community setting. The ADOC reported FY10 length of stay and recidivism data for the 43 individuals for whom the ADOC managed funding for housing placements. The ADOC has reported the number of jail days in the 12 months prior to Trust funded housing placement, the number of days while in Trust funded housing, and the number of days in jail in FY10 after Trust funded housing ended.

The ADOC authorized Trust funds to pay for a cumulative total of 2,416 days of housing for 43 individuals, ranging from 2 to 30 days in an assisted living facility and 5 to 172 days in a supervised board and care transitional housing setting. In the 12 months prior to housing, the 43 mentally disabled individuals had spent a total of 9,059 days in jail, ranging from one individual who spent no time in a jail bed to 13 individuals who each had spent 365 jail-bed days. These 43 individuals spent a cumulative total of 81 days in jail, with 36 having no jail bed days and only one individual jailed for 25 days, while in ADOC-managed Trust housing. After the Trust funded housing ended, these same individuals subsequently spent a cumulative total of 1,235 additional days in jail in FY10. The time spent in jail during this period ranged from no jail bed days for 27, to one individual who had 273 days in jail. **The reduction of 7,824 jail bed days** clearly demonstrates that housing contributes strongly to beneficiary success and a reduction in legal recidivism.

The DOC Discharge Incentive Grant improved beneficiary quality of life, enhanced participation in beneficiary participation in community based treatment, improved personal and public safety, and showed dramatic reduction in legal recidivism.

D. Partners for Progress

Partners for Progress, a private non-profit organization, was created in 1998 to collaborate with the Alaska judicial system, social service agencies and treatment providers to support the development of therapeutic courts and therapeutic justice initiatives statewide. Partners continues to collaborate with the Court System to provide services that assist alcoholic and other addicted offenders to make the changes needed to achieve healthy and law-abiding lives. The overall goal is to protect the public by stopping the cycle of repeated crime driven by addiction.

Since 2009, Partners has collaborated with the ADOC to use AHFC grant funds to provide temporary housing assistance for homeless individuals who were released from prison on felony probation. Managed in collaboration with ADOC probation

officers, and a number of public service community non-profit entities, Partners' Homeless Assistance Reentry Program (HARP) has provided temporary housing and housing-related assistance to over 200 individuals.

E. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program

For many years, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) has collaborated with the ADOC on a number of issues related to special needs housing for people being released from correctional institutions. The AHFC developed and implemented the Special Needs Housing Grant Program (SNHG) in early 2000, with the ADOC and other state agency staff. As with other low-income populations, rental assistance is the key to successful independent living options for people with disabilities.

In 2009, AHFC and the ADOC agreed to provide Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) to ADOC prisoners with disabilities who were being released from correctional facilities. Eligibility is based on physical disability, substance or alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS or eligibility as Trust Beneficiary. This program started with an initial \$300,000 budget funded under the state's HOME Investment Partnerships Program and is available to former prisoners throughout Alaska where AHFC has public housing offices -- excluding Anchorage and Bethel. The ADOC screens and selects eligible households and refers these individuals to AHFC for final approval and processing. TBRA provides eligible households with rental assistance for a minimum of six months up to a maximum of one year. It is estimated that the number of people to be served will be 12 to 15 per year.

During 2009 and 2010, after numerous inquiries to AHFC staff from parole officers expressing an interest in rental assistance for the ADOC's general population on community supervision, the AHFC and the ADOC expanded their agreement to include another \$300,000 in TBRA for people under community supervision, regardless of disability. Another 15-20 people are expected to be served with this component.