

# **Alaska Department of Corrections Substance Abuse Treatment Services Status Report**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) has developed the capacity to provide substance abuse treatment services to over 1,000 inmates per year. These services include programming at eleven separate institutions, two community based programs (including aftercare), one CRC based program, and assessment and referral services.

The need for these services is self-evident but it has also been quantified in a recent, Alaska specific, research project that determined that around 86% of the prison population has substance abuse related problems. The current programming offered by DOC certainly helps to mitigate the consequences associated with substance abuse related disorders but additional efforts are needed.

In order to expand the department's ability to treat offenders with substance abuse disorders, services were broadened between SFY10 and SFY11 and the projections for SFY12 show an additional increase. Not only does collected data show an expansion of output it also suggests positive outcomes.

According to DOC data, these substance abuse programs have reduced the rate of recidivism for the individuals who have engaged in, and completed, the programs -- 37% recidivism rate for those who completed the program compared to 58% for the control group in the SFY10 target population and 9% recidivism rate compared to 37% for the control group in the SFY11 target population.

Given the clear connection between substance abuse and crime and the role it plays in Alaska's recidivism rate it is clear that DOC substance abuse treatment programs play an important role in promoting public safety. The long-term societal benefits offset program costs.

## **DOC'S CURRENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT PROGRAMMING**

As part of DOC's mission to provide reformatory programs several substance abuse treatment programs are available to incarcerated offenders.

Each of these programs were developed using characteristics of evidence-based programming and/or by duplicating previously validated treatment models.

The programs are described below:

### Assessment and Referral:

These services include an informational orientation in which the offender is offered information on substance abuse treatment options within DOC institutions and in the community. Comprehensive substance abuse assessments are also available along with a referral based upon the assessment results.

The Assessment and Referral services are available in the following locations:

- Anchorage: Anchorage Correctional Center
- Bethel: Yukon-Kuskokwim Correctional Center
- Palmer: Mat-Su Pretrial Facility

*Combined the assessment and referral services have the ability to provide over 900 assessments and referrals per year.*

#### Pre-Treatment Services:

These serve a variety of inmates and provide substance abuse treatment information, alcohol and other drug education groups, anger management groups, recovery support groups, and individual consultation sessions.

Offenders engaging in these services may attend as many or as few sessions as is warranted depending on need, length of incarceration, and space availability. While some of the services will be more structured, and require subsequent attendance in order to receive a certification of completion, efforts are made to make each encounter meaningful.

Pretreatment services are available in Bethel at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Correctional Center. *This service has the ability to provide for up to 80 individuals per year.*

#### Life Success Substance Abuse Treatment (LSSAT):

These programs are based on the Intensive Outpatient Treatment criteria. The services provided use a cognitive behavioral approach. Inmates in the program are required to participate for a minimum of three months.

While in the program offenders participate in other classes and work assignments within the institution. They have access to necessary support services such as education and vocation courses, medical services, mental health services, support groups (sponsored by the community) and religious services.

The LSSAT programs are available at the following locations:

- Anchorage: community-based program
- Bethel: Tundra Center CRC

- Fairbanks: Fairbanks Correctional Center and community-based program
- Juneau: Lemon Creek Correctional Center
- Kenai: Wildwood Correctional Center
- Nome: Anvil Mountain Correctional Center
- Palmer: Palmer Correctional Center
- Seward: Spring Creek Correctional Center

*Combined the LSSAT programs have the ability to provide services to over 800 offenders per year.*

#### Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT):

These programs are based on the Residential/Intensive Inpatient Treatment criteria. The services provided use a cognitive behavioral approach. These programs are comprehensive and intensive; they are designed to intervene and treat substance use disorders using a Therapeutic Community model. Inmates in these programs are expected to participate for a minimum of six months.

Offenders in the initial and middle stages of the program have limited interaction with other DOC program and services. In the stage immediately preceding release from the program, inmates are introduced to additional services and support systems within the institution.

RSAT programs are available in the following locations:

- Hudson, Colorado: Hudson Correctional Facility
- Eagle River: Hiland Mountain Correctional Center

*Combined the RSAT programs have the ability to provide services to over 140 offenders per year.*

#### Continuing Care:

These programs are based on the Outpatient Treatment criteria. Services are designed to complement the treatment that the offender has previously received. Length of the program and the program requirements are based upon individual needs.

The Continuing Care programs are available in the following locations:

- Anchorage
- Fairbanks

*Combined the continuing care programs have the ability to provide services to over 280 offenders per year.*

## THE NEED FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT SERVICES

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University concludes that 85% of the individuals incarcerated in U.S. prisons could benefit from substance abuse treatment. While this figure is validated by several additional studies DOC wanted to be sure it was true for the Alaska prison population.

As a result, DOC conducted a research project in SFY11. The results indicated that 86% of the Alaska's DOC population showed the potential for having a significant substance abuse related problem. It was also indicated in this study that around half of the individuals who needed services would willingly engage in those services if they were made available

Not all of these individuals are incarcerated long enough to take advantage of the services offered within the institution and some of them do not reside in a community that has a program available. In addition, some offenders who meet both of these criteria will refuse to participate.

Annually there are roughly 5,000<sup>i</sup> individuals who remain incarcerated for more than 120 days (long enough to complete an LSSAT program). Of these 5,000 about 4,300 are in need of services and around 2,150 of them would accept services if they were made available.

- *Approximately 32,000 individuals are remanded to DOC facilities annually(excluding Title 47 remands);*
- *Approximately 27,500 of those remanded screened positive for substance abuse related problems;*
- *Approximately 14,000 of those needing treatment services would voluntarily engage in those programs;*
- *Approximately 4,300 of those needing treatment services would be incarcerated long enough to engage in, and complete, a substance abuse treatment program;*
- *Approximately 2,150 of those meeting eligibility for treatment services would willingly engage in a substance abuse treatment program.*

We also have a number of offenders who are eligible and willing to engage in the longer, and more intensive, RSAT programs (these individuals are included as part of the numbers above).

Annually DOC has the ability to provide LSSAT or RSAT services to 750 offenders while they are incarcerated. We also have 190 of community

based LSSAT slots available for those who have been released from an institution.

For a number of years it has been apparent that substance abuse and substance abuse related problems have played a substantial role in criminal behavior. Within the DOC these problems have been under-addressed and thus have contributed to a high rate of recidivism.

Currently, DOC is unable to provide substance abuse treatment to all of the offenders who would willingly engage in those services (and the increased number of offenders who need services and would be willing to receive them if additional incentives were provided) but we are addressing the problems and have made significant strides in this area.

## WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR

SFY2010 was the first full year in which the majority of the current substance abuse treatment services were operating. SFY2011 saw a continuation of services along with several refinements and further infrastructure development.

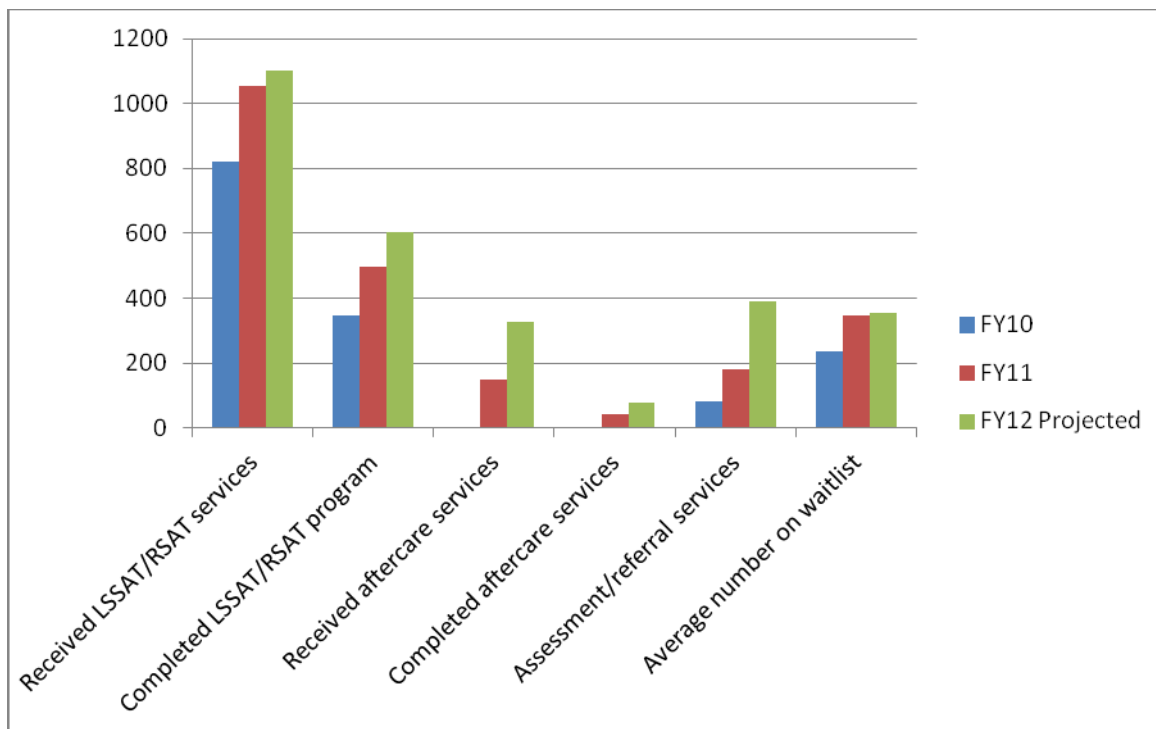
The results of the work done thus far, both in terms of outputs and outcomes, are promising. The DOC is clearly on the right track to implement and sustain effective substance abuse treatment services.

The numbers below reflect updated figures and include both the community-based and institution-based LSSATs along with the RSAT programs (the aftercare numbers only include those individuals who entered one of the formal, DOC funded, community-based aftercare programs).

### Outputs

	SFY10	SFY11	SFY12 Projected
<b>Number of individuals who received services (LSSAT/RSAT):</b>	823	1,054	1,100
<b>Number of individuals who completed a program (LSSAT/RSAT):</b>	347	497	603
<b>Number of individuals who received aftercare services:</b>	**	149	326
<b>Number of individuals who completed an aftercare program:</b>	**	42	77
<b>Number of individuals who received assessment and referral services:</b>	81	180	389
<b>Number of individuals on a waitlist at end of SFY (LSSAT/RSAT):</b>	238	346	355

\*\* data not available



### Impacts on Offender Management:

While the primary goal of substance abuse services within institutions is generally the reduction of recidivism - other benefits are also derived.

Superintendents within DOC are uniformly supportive of the LSSAT and RSAT programs. Program participants are generally better behaved and are less likely to engage in behaviors that violate institutional rules.

Several of the short term benefits identified with program participation include:

- Improved interpersonal communication skills;
- Better social interaction skills;
- Improved impulse-control;
- Improved anger management abilities; and
- Increased ability to accept their current situation.

These benefits have a significant impact on the institutions and their operations. These programs offer something constructive for the inmates to do and learn thus leaving less time for negative behaviors to become management problems. These programs also contribute to making staff work environments safer with reduced threats of violence and hostility.

## Impacts on Recidivism:

The DOC conducted a recidivism study for individuals who engaged in and completed one of the Department funded substance abuse treatment programs in SFY10 or SFY11; the results are promising.

The study focused on two distinct groups for each fiscal year:

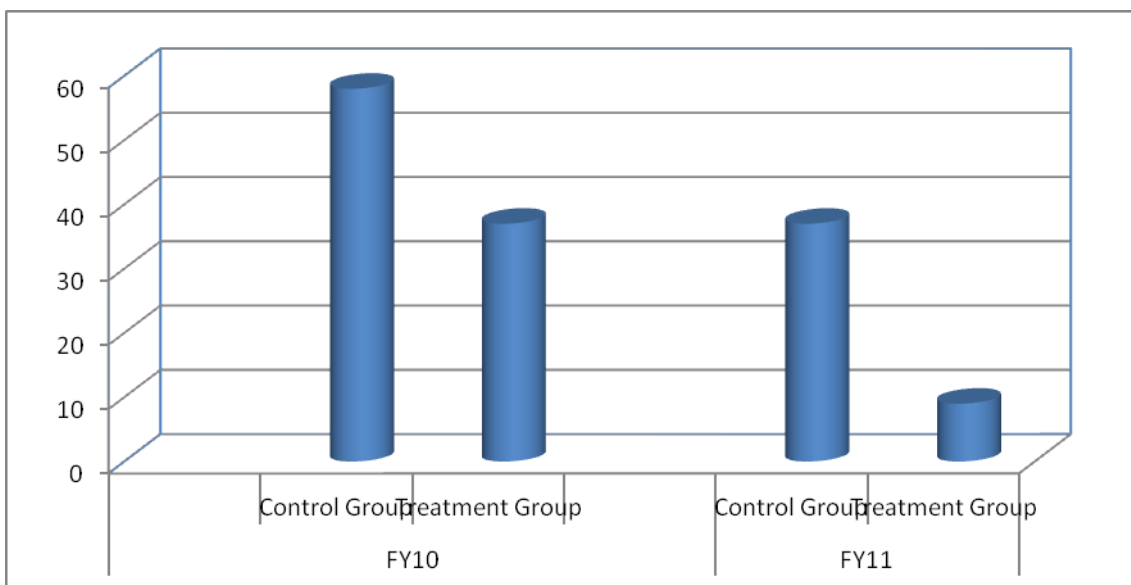
- 1) Control group: inmates who served at least four (4) months within an DOC institution and who were released during the applicable fiscal year.
- 2) Treatment group: inmates who completed one of the DOC substance abuse treatment programs and were released during the applicable fiscal year.

For SFY10:

- 2,057 were in the control group and 1,203 returned due to some level of re-offense (**recidivism rate = 58%**).
- 334 were in the treatment group and 122 returned due to some level of re-offense (**recidivism rate = 37%**).

For SFY11:

- 1,877 were in the control group and 692 returned due to some level of re-offense (**recidivism rate = 37%**).
- 421 were in the treatment group and 38 returned due to some level of re-offense (**recidivism rate = 9%**).





It is expected that the recidivism rates for each population group will rise over the next several months and years. It is assumed that the completed group rate will rise quicker than the control group and thus the gap between them will shrink. As it stands, the difference between the rates in the SFY10 and SFY11 groups are 22% and 28% respectively; the department expects that after a couple of years, the difference will be closer to the national average of 9 – 12%. However, based on these preliminary results we have reason to be optimistic that we will beat the averages.

## **CONCLUSION**

The DOC continues to promote public safety by playing its role to reduce statewide recidivism.

The causal relationship between drug abuse and crime is well established as are the rampant problems substance abuse causes in our communities throughout Alaska. The inclusion of substance abuse treatment services within the DOC system has shown positive results. DOC is determined to continue work to maximize the resources devoted to these programs to ensure the highest quality substance abuse treatment programs that work to reduce recidivism.

Ongoing efforts are needed to further refine the services offered and thus increase the benefit to the State of Alaska. These efforts will be premised upon the collection and analysis of data and will be developed within the philosophical and economic framework established by the State.

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<sup>i</sup> This figure was calculated by determining if an offender was incarcerated for 120 consecutive days or more during 2011; it also included those offenders who were incarcerated for 90 consecutive days in 2010 and continued into 2011 for at least 30 uninterrupted days.