



The Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority

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To: Representative Wes Keller, Chair, House Judiciary
Committee and members of the House and Senate
Judiciary Committees
From: Jeff Jessee, CEO, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
and co-chair of the Recidivism Reduction Plan
workgroup
CC: Members of the Recidivism Reduction Plan workgroup
Date: 9/22/2014
Re: Update on the Recidivism Reduction Plan included as
legislative intent language in HB266

MEMO

MEETINGS

The group has met twice: on April 21 and on June 20. Named attendees include:

- DOC Commissioner Schmidt
- DOLWD Commissioner Blumer
- DHSS Commissioner Streur
- Bryan Butcher, CEO Alaska Housing Finance Committee
- Christine Johnson, Administrative Director, Alaska Court System
- Jeff Jessee, CEO, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

The next meeting is scheduled in October.

April 21, 2014, During the group's first meeting, it was decided that the Trust, on behalf of the workgroup, would hire a contractor to help with workgroup facilitation, assist with data collection, gather information, and develop the final report. The Trust subsequently contracted with Justice Improvement Solutions, the contract is not to exceed \$82,000.

June 20, 2014, the group agreed upon the following:

1. recidivism reduction definition
2. the group's mission
3. how to address target populations

The group agreed to use the following **recidivism definition**: "An individual who is released from incarceration and returns to incarceration as the result of a conviction for any offense type - felony, misdemeanor, or parole/probation violation - within three years of release." This definition will provide important baseline data on the percentage of people released from jail/prison, both misdemeanants, felons and probationers, who return to custody within three years of release.

AGREED UPON OBJECTIVES

1. Encourage continued collaboration to reduce recidivism. The group agreed that its efforts should include both the felony and misdemeanor populations. The proposed recidivism definition includes remands for probation and parole violations, an indication of parole/probation effectiveness. It will also provide important base-line data on the percentage of people released from jail/prison, both misdemeanants and felons, who return within three years of their release.
2. Ensure that DOC's hard prison beds are used by individuals who actually require the expense of these beds and not on individuals for whom there is not the same public safety concern.
3. Consider best practice or promising practices currently in place to reduce recidivism, determine their efficacy, determine their current capacity, the number of people not served and what it would take to increase the percentage of those who need to be served.
4. The named departments need to continue to collaborate so that releasing prisoners have the tools and resources needed to successfully return to their community.
5. The state knows that it will likely cost at least \$250 million to build another prison given what it cost to build Goose Creek Correctional Center plus annual operating budget \$50 million. The goal is to promote agency collaborations that will reduce recidivism and cost the state a fraction of the price to build a new prison.

In addition to the meetings mentioned above, the contractor has individually met with the following departments and individuals:

Department of Corrections (DOC)

Commissioner Schmidt

Deputy Commissioner, Ron Taylor

Director, Bryan Brandenburg

Health Administrator, Laura Brooks

Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

Commissioner Streur

Department of Workforce and Labor Development (DOWLD)

Commissioner, Diane Blumer

Communications Director, Beth Leschper

Alaska Court System (ACS)

District Court, Judge Stephanie Rhoades

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)

Planner, Mark Romick

Community Providers and National Recidivism Experts

Denise Morris, Executive Director, Alaska Native Justice Center

Janet McCabe, Board Chair, Partners for Progress

Lisa Rieger, Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Ken Miller, New Life Development
Jim Seller, Akeela, Inc.,
Jerry Jenkins, Anchorage Community Mental Health Services
Council of State Governments
PEW Charitable Trusts, Public Safety Project

PROPOSED FOCUS AREAS FOR WORK GROUP

Identify rehabilitative and reentry programs in Alaska that:

1. Appear to be effective in addressing reentry needs
2. Identify for what percentage of the returning offender population these programs address
3. If the need exceeds the resource, what would it take to expand to reach a larger percentage of the population

IDENTIFIED CURRENT COLLABORATIONS TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM

1. DOLWD and DOC
 - a) DOLWD facilitates the “Bridges to Success” Program at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center. This program is for female inmates within six months of release. The DOLWD portion includes testing all participants on WorkKeys, a critical step for them to obtain a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Job Center staff attempt to connect transitioning inmates to job centers in the community to which they return.
 - b) Commissioner Blumer and members of her staff participate in Hiland Mountain’s Success Inside and Out Program.
 - c) WorkKeys tests and NCRC certification processes are provided at Goose Creek Correctional Centers.
 - d) “Employment After Incarceration” workshops are offered at job centers at Midtown, Muldoon, Eagle River, and Mat-Su. Job Center facilitators are points of contact for parolee/probation referrals from DOC Probation Officers.
 - e) DOLWD has agreed to permit AmeriCorps Members to work specifically with the former offender population.
 - f) DOLWD works to place former inmates in apprenticeship programs when the inmate started the apprenticeship program in the institution.
 - g) DOLWD is working with DOC to expand the Inmate Work Release Program with Alaska’s seafood processors
2. Community reentry Coalitions – Anchorage , Mat-Su, Juneau, Kenai and Dillingham
3. DOC and AHFC
 - a) DOC and AHFC Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program
 - b) New Life Development Transitional Housing
 - c) SNUG and Tanana Chiefs Conference and RuralCAP’s Karluk Manor Housing First projects
 - d) Homelessness Assistance Program
4. Partners Reentry Center in collaboration with DOC, AHFC, DOLWD, ANJC & other community providers

5. DOC, DHSS and the Alaska Court System
 - a) Therapeutic/ Wellness Courts
 - b) Second DUI voucher program
 - c) Mental Health Courts
 - d) Grantees on the Assess, Plan, Identify and Coordinate (APIC) program including community providers
6. DOC and Medicaid
 - a) The DOC and DHSS have had discussions around inmates who might qualify currently qualify for Medicaid without expansion. Preliminary analysis shows this is a relative small proportion of the population, mainly women, pregnant or with children, who might qualify for precertification/prequalification. DHSS would be dependent on DOC for identifying potentially eligible recipients.
7. Criminal Justice Working Group (CJWG) – a voluntary collaborative workgroup of commissioner, director and municipal high level participants that either directly participate in or are impacted by the state’s criminal justice system. The CJWG has two committees – the prevention and recidivism – the focus of which is to identify and monitor cost-effective, evidence-based ways to prevent crime and reduce recidivism. The efficiencies committee works to improve the efficient administration of criminal justice system between all stakeholders.

All of the above are examples of current collaborative efforts that appear to be positively impacting recidivism in Alaska. The Recidivism Reduction Plan will report on these collaborations, make recommendations as to how to improve these efforts and recommend other new promising practices, all in keeping with the goal of substantially delaying the need to build another correctional facility. The workgroup is currently in the process of identifying:

1. current capacity for each of these collaborative strategies;
2. how many people are not being served that would benefit from services; and
3. what it would cost to provide for needed expansion.

The workgroup is anticipating having a draft of the Recidivism Reduction Plan completed by December 1, 2014. From there, an executive summary and legislative presentation will be prepared.