

Second Chance Society Initiatives

State of Connecticut Department of Correction

Second Chance Society Initiatives

- The Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) is an essential component of Governor Malloy's Second Chance Society initiative.
- Public and staff safety are enhanced when offenders are provided incentives to address the causes of their criminal behavior.
- Consistent with DOC's Strategic Plan, our initiatives are evidence-based, data driven and will be launched within our existing budget.

Department of Correction



Second Chance Society Initiatives

1. **Centralized Community Release Unit**
2. Risk Reduction Earned Credit
3. Reintegration Unit
4. Parole and Community Services

Centralized Community Release Unit

- A LEAN event was conducted by the Department of Correction, and as a result the Department, within existing resources, has developed a Centralized Community Release Unit.
- Currently policies and procedures are quite complicated and requires that multiple staff members review offender release applications before a final decision is rendered.
- Full implementation is expected by March 20, 2015.

Centralized Community Release Unit (cont)

- The Department's new procedures, which will be implemented, will:
 - Promote public safety by ensuring that offenders are reviewed for Community Release by one high level decision maker, pairing the correct intensity of supervision and dosage of community treatment for each offender. This will be accomplished utilizing new assessment tools such as the Statewide Collaborative Offender Risk Evaluation System (SCORES).
 - Promote staff safety by allowing staff resources to be reallocated and focus more on facility operations. The time that was spent reviewing applications will be used for other critical functions such as clinical supervision of necessary programming.

Centralized Community Release Unit (cont)

- Improve the facility environment by enhancing internal communications, allowing supervisors to focus attentions on staff development, training and supervision of employees.
- Simplify the review process to make it more understandable to the offender population and line staff who interact with them.

Centralized Community Release Unit (cont)

- While procedures are currently being finalized it is envisioned that the following policies will be adhered to:
 - An offender will be identified by the facility classification staff as eligible for Community Release.
 - Facility staff will assemble materials required for the decision to be made and submit the review electronically to the Centralized Community Release Unit (CRU), (removing four levels of review in the current process).
 - CRU will review the materials and render a decision consistent with public safety and risk reduction.
 - CRU will notify the facility staff and Parole and Community Service staff electronically of the release decision.

Centralized Community Release Unit (cont)

- Measures of success will include:
 - The timeliness of individual decisions.
 - Reduction in the number of cases returned to facilities for more information.
 - Increased utilization of residential and non-residential programs.
 - Reduced instances of technical and criminal violation.

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Risk Reduction Earned Credit (RREC):

- The Department of Correction instituted Risk Reduction Earned Credit several years ago. In the time since we have operationalized RREC, we have learned several lessons about its application and its effect on the inmate population. In order to capitalize on our experience and to conform to evidence-based processes, the Department has initiated a review and revision of current procedures to incentivize program performance and to align with risk classification.

RREC (cont)

- The Department's new procedures, which will be implemented in 2015 will:
 - Promote public safety by ensuring that offenders are placed in and complete programs in accordance with the Department's newly instituted Statewide Collaborative Offender Risk Evaluation System (SCORES) and Women's Risk and Needs Assessment (WRNA). (SCORES and WRNA are next generation, dynamic assessments which were developed by the University of Cincinnati and are now used by Department of Correction facilities, Parole and Community Services offices and the Board of Pardons and Paroles).
 - Promote staff safety by building incentives for offenders to progress from high security to a less controlled environment as each offender progresses towards eventual re-integration to society (and the vast majority of offenders will do so). An offender will receive proportionately less RREC as long as a high security classification is maintained. However, if an offender completes assigned programs and follows facility and Officer direction, the number of days may be increased.

RREC (cont)

- The Department's new procedures, which will be implemented in the Fall of 2015 will also:
 - Improve the facility environment by reducing incidents and the trauma all correctional staff and offenders are exposed to. Risk Reduction Earned Credit has resulted in the reduction of incidents and, when calibrated to risk assessments, promises to further improve institutional climate.
 - Simplify the system to make it more understandable to the inmate population and the line staff who interact with them.

RREC (cont)

- While procedures are currently being developed and are the subject of a LEAN Event (being held this week), it is envisioned that the following schedule may be adhered to:
 - An offender classified to a long term restrictive status, one who assaults a staff member or is a member of a security risk group shall be ineligible for RREC.
 - A High Security (Risk Level 4) offender may receive the least amount of credit authorized under statute.
 - A Medium Security (Risk Level 3) offender may receive more than the High Security offender.

RREC (cont)

- A Minimum Security offender (Risk Level 2) may receive the maximum amount of credit. An offender who progresses from High or Medium to Minimum Security may receive the credit that was withheld for program participation and exemplary conduct.
- An offender who is approved for a discretionary release (Level 1) may continue to receive the maximum amount of credit authorized by statute.
- Any pattern of serious misconduct, or the refusal to participate in necessary programming, shall result in the forfeiture of any RREC earned as well as the denial of any future credit.

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Reintegration Unit

- The vast majority of offenders currently incarcerated in Connecticut's prisons will return to the community. There are over 1,000 incarcerated that are approved for a discretionary release within the next 18 months and many more who will discharge at the end of a sentence. As the prison population continues to decrease, corresponding to a declining crime rate, the Department will designate that one facility, approximately 600 beds, be re-commissioned a Re-integration Unit.

Reintegration Unit (cont)

- The following will be critical components of the Unit:
 - Intensive preparation for re-integration utilizing staff, non-profit providers, volunteer and offender resources for direct program and service delivery.
 - In-reach efforts to ensure pre-release relationships between community, parole and probation parties and the offenders. Connecticut's experience suggests that in-reach efforts combined with service delivery post-release increases engagement and reduces recidivism.
 - Each offender will be assigned a rehabilitative path(s) based on assessed needs consistent with the assessment provided by the Department. Such assessments include Statewide Collaborative Risk Offender Evaluation System, the Addiction Severity Index, and the Treatment and Programming Assessment Instrument. The pathways will directly address the offender's risk for re-offense and attendant re-entry needs.

Reintegration Unit (cont)

- Provide offenders with and hold offenders accountable for participating in, eight (8) to ten (10) hours of meaningful activity per day. This may include work, educational or vocational instruction, programming or community services.
- Offenders will apply to, and be selected for, specific units. This will ensure a positive, mutually supportive and forward thinking climate within the Unit.
- Following a therapeutic community model, the Re-integration Unit will be regulated to a significant degree by the participating offenders. The priority will be offenders holding themselves and each other accountable for the environment in the Unit. This will emulate the level of responsibility needed to be successful in society.

Reintegration Unit (cont)

- The success of the Unit will be measured by:
 - Reduced recidivism of the offenders taking part in the program.
 - Decreased numbers of incidents in the facility environment itself.
 - Increased post-incarceration engagement in programming.
- The Reintegration Unit will be dedicated during April 2015; it is anticipated that a women's Reintegration Unit will be piloted later in the calendar year.

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Parole and Community Services Division (PCS)

- As the prison population decreases, the Department of Correction anticipates both an increase in the number of offenders who are supervised in the community on a variety of discretionary and non-discretionary statutes, but also a commensurate shift in staff and other resources to the community. To this end, the Department will initiate a top-to-bottom assessment of PCS structure, procedure and practice.

Parole and Community Services Division (cont)

- Documenting and measuring successful practices in the specialized supervision units.
- Engaging technical assistance to perform an analysis of the operation and effectiveness of the PCS.
- Simplifying facility-field communication utilizing the Community Release and Central Intake Units.
- Assigning dedicated PCS training assets to the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development.

Parole and Community Services Division (cont)

- Developing a medium-term strategy to reallocate facility staff in appropriate classifications to support parole officers in their roles as supervision agents.
- Expand the use of facility-based graduated sanctions, such as the TOP program.
- Continued collaboration with Board of Pardons and Paroles on matters of mutual concern
- Increasing the planning and evaluation capacity of PCS.

Questions
