

Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission

Legislative Office Building

Minutes for November 10, 2010 Meeting

9:00 AM

Members present: Brian Austin, Undersecretary, Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division, Office of Policy and Management, *Chairperson*; James M. Thomas, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety; Susan Storey, Chief Public Defender; Kevin Kane, Chief State's Attorney; Leo Arnone, Acting Commissioner, Department of Correction; Robert Farr, Chairman, Board of Pardons and Paroles; Judge Patrick L. Carroll, Deputy Chief Court Administrator; William H. Carbone, Executive Director, Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division; Susan Hamilton, Commissioner, Department of Children and Families; Nancy Kushins, Executive Director, CONNSACS; George Coleman, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Education; Dan Bannish, Director of Health Services, Department of Correction; Mayor Scott Kaupin; Richard P. Healy; Laurie Deneen.

Chair Brian Austin convened the meeting to order at 9:15 am. The Commission members introduced themselves. The minutes for the October 14, 2010 meeting were unanimously accepted.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Discussion:

Ivan Kuzyk, Director, CT Statistical Analysis Center, OPM Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division provided a presentation on age and the extent of incarceration among male offenders released from prison in 2005. The analysis and methodology is summarized in a two-page report sent to CJPAC members. The report is also available on the OPM website. The findings include:

- Youth and sentence history are both important predictors of high recidivism risk.
- Most male prisoners (67%) who were released or discharged from prison in 2005 had served a prior term of incarceration as a sentenced offender in a Connecticut prison.
- Men, under the age of 24, completing their first sentence were the largest group of male offenders released or discharged during 2005. 63% of these young men were returned to prison within three years of their release.
- Recidivism among individuals under 24 is twice that of individuals over 40. The most common offenses for the younger offenders were violation of probation and sale of narcotics, followed by larceny and dui offenses. The most common offenses by the older offenders were dui, drugs and larceny.

Members discussed the correlation and relationship between recidivism and demographic characteristics including race, poverty and education.

Chair Brian Austin offered to provide the presentation to front-line state agency managers. Commissioner Coleman recommended that the recidivism data should be shared with the *Connecticut Employment and Training Commission* to help develop strategies for working with youth.

CSSD Director William Carbone and Brian Hill, CSSD Research and Planning Director provided a presentation on development of a “*Results Based Accountability*” (RBA) report card for the adult probation system. The RBA process measures “how much do we do, how well do we do it and what is the outcome”.

The focus of the probation RBA process is to evaluate risk and decrease caseload to allow for oversight of the higher risk offenders.

- The number of probationers on active caseloads has decreased by 22 percent since January 2010, while the total supervision caseload has decreased by only six percent
- The average caseload of a supervision officer in January 2009 was 91; today the average is 65.
- Technical violation (TV) rates have trended lower compared to previous years. A technical violation may be considered to a “gateway” to re-incarceration. The “re-arrest” rate has not increased in response to the lower TV rate.
- The probation completion rate is higher than the national average
- The 12-month re-arrest rates for clients who complete AIC services is generally declining
- A one percentage point drop in the re-arrest rate, sustained over a full year, results in approximately 280 fewer persons recidivating annually
- Some special offender sub-populations are not experiencing a decrease in recidivism; such as specific groups of juvenile offenders.

The data demonstrates that the interagency collaboration in combination with new policies and procedures have produced manageable caseloads and evidence-based interventions that improve oversight and accountability of offenders. The PA 08-01 reforms have helped to make changes in criminal behavior and led to a decrease in arrest rates.

The Commission members discussed the importance of current arrest data. Attorney Kane recommended that the Commission look at a comparison of reported crime vs. actual crimes vs. number of arrests. Based on the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data through 2008 indicates that violent and property crime has not spiked.

Department of Public Safety Commissioner James Thomas noted that all police departments are required to submit arrest data to DPS and most departments submit that data on a monthly basis.

Behavioral Health Subcommittee

Loel Meckel, Assistant Director Forensic Services, DMHAS reported that the behavioral health subcommittee is reviewing community-based programs funded by DMHAS, CSSD and DOC to identify options to increase efficiencies, streamline the referral process and identify sub-populations that are not being reached. The subcommittee is also exploring ways to use peers as mentors during the treatment process.

Sentenced offenders with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) are referred by DOC to the DMHAS community-based system upon discharge. These referrals have declined from 400 referrals in 2005 to 200 in 2010. The decline is an indication of the positive outcomes from interagency collaborations that focus on providing earlier intervention services.

Dr. Bannish, Director Health Services, DOC noted that the drop in referrals at the “back end” may be due to the success of interventions on the “front end” such as Jail Diversion program, specialized training for police, CORP program, and mental health probation and parole units. It was also noted that there is a spike in cases of

dementia and some of these cases may migrate to the criminal justice system and require additional specialized services.

Agency Updates

Department of Correction Commissioner Leo Aronne reported that as of November 14 ,2010, the prison population was 18,244; this is 402 less than last year. The “Accused” population is 126 higher than last year. The community count is 57 versus 47 last year.

To date, 430 hearings have been conducted using video conferencing technology. The technology is generating substantial savings by reducing the need for in-person hearings and avoiding expenditures for transportation and personnel. Expanded installation of equipment in additional facilities is helping to reduce the waiting list for video hearings.

Chair Brian Austin reported that the *VERA Institute of Justice*, a national policy analysis and research organization, released a report that recognized Connecticut DOC as a model for other states in developing cost control strategies. The VERA reviewed 44 states’ corrections budgets and found that Connecticut DOC had the second highest reduction (7.7%) in appropriations for fiscal year 2010-2011. Commissioner Arnone noted that DOC has achieved savings, in part, by reducing the food services cost from \$3.50 per day per inmate to \$2.50 per day by establishing a centralized food service operation. Additional savings have come from early release programs as well as specialized community re-entry efforts.

Chair Brian Austin noted that the VERA report also recognized Connecticut for the prudent and efficient use of ARRA funds. The *Office of Policy and Management* is the lead agency for the ARRA Justice Assistance funds and allocated the funds to support one-time projects that generate significant savings across the entire criminal justice system. In particular, the VERA report cited the video-conferencing project as a notable ARRA funded cost-reduction strategy.

Susan Storey, Chief Public Defender, distributed their legislative package to the Prison and Jail Overcrowding (PJOW) workgroup for input and comment. Although the crime indicators are trending down, the caseload for public defenders is increasing. This may be due to the poor economic conditions that increase the need for public funded legal aid. The public defender’s legislative proposal will be revised based on the feedback from the PJOW.

Board of Pardon and Paroles (BOPP) Chairman Robert Farr recommended that the commission consider developing a cost-benefit analysis of the various re-entry and diversion initiatives that have been put in place during the past four years. The BOPP Case Notes System upgrade is under way. Eventually, BOPP would like to have additional functionality to track “success rates’. BOPP is participating in the federal *Learning Sites* program and receiving technical assistance from the federal agency to develop evidence-based practices.

Judge Carroll reported that *the Office of Victim Services* is conducting an informational and training session for legislators and press on the SAVIN Automated Information System. The training session will also be available on CTN.

Chair Brian Austin reminded commission members to review the email messages and materials he sent out during past three weeks regarding a *CJPAC Transition Issues* Report. Agencies are requested to draft summaries of accomplishments and challenges for the CJPAC to address in the future. The summaries will be compiled into a report and presented at the December 09 CJPAC meeting.

Chair Austin reviewed the proposed meeting dates for *Calendar Year 2011*.

Next meeting is Thursday, December 09, 2010 at the LOB.