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The Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative

STATEMENT

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INNOVATIVE PRISONER REENTRY PROGRAMS

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Agencies

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STATEMENT

Chairman Mollohan, Ranking Member Wolf, and Members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to be with you today to discuss the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI).

The vision of the MPRI is that every prisoner released to the community has the tools needed to succeed. The mission of the MPRI is to significantly reduce crime and enhance public safety by implementing a seamless system of services for offenders from the time of their entry to prison through their transition, community reintegration and aftercare in their communities.

My presentation today will include five major points:

1. Prisoner re-entry can be a successful crime fighting tool if it is "evidence based" that is, based on research. The research is clear about what works to reduce crime.
2. Community programs are more effective to fight crime than prison and we must have significant reinvestment in order to use them (both in lieu of and after prison). But rather than just a program, the MPRI is a complete system change, and that is what is required to improve former prisoner success rates and reduce recidivism. For repeat violent offenders, we need both imprisonment and effective re-entry.
3. The MPRI is evidence based. It is effective because we require comprehensive local planning, we have a long term commitment to the work, and we are dedicated to effective monitoring and evaluation.
4. When taken together with front end alternatives to keep admissions low, re-entry can reduce prison populations and prisons can be closed. Only closing prisons can generate significant cost savings for reinvestments.
5. The Second Chance Act is good federal policy and more funding is needed. Compare national funding ranges with Michigan - which will fund MPRI in FY 2010 at \$57M - and recognize that Michigan is under-funded even at that level if it is to fully reach the 60% of moderate to high risk prisoners who are returning.

I. Evidence Based Practices - Reducing Crime by Focusing on What Works

Studies show there is little relationship between crime and incarceration and that the cost benefit of imprisonment does not support lengthy periods of incarceration as the best way to reduce crime¹. While increased incarceration has contributed to crime rate reductions in the past, studies indicate it will prevent considerably fewer crimes in the future and may actually increase crime in Michigan². Prisoners who serve longer terms do not recidivate less frequently. Re-arrest rates for former prisoners who serve one, two, three, four or five years in prison are nearly the same³.

The rising cost of the corrections budget is not driven by increases in crime, it is driven by the sheer size of the prison system: personnel costs and benefits, health care for prisoners, and fuel consumption.⁴ The size of the corrections system is driven more by policy decisions than by crime.

Michigan's incarceration rate and the size of its corrections budget are out of line with surrounding states and the nation as a whole. Michigan prisoners have a 70% longer length of stay in prison that drives up corrections costs considerably.⁵ When costs to corrections absorb an inordinate amount of tax dollars, other more effective, long term crime fighting strategies suffer. For example, research shows that for severely disadvantaged children, participation in pre-kindergarten dramatically reduced participation in juvenile and adult crime, and increased high school graduation, employment and earnings⁶.

The MPRI was developed, in part, to address and help restore balance to the cost of corrections.

II. Community Investments Are Effective In Protecting Public Safety and Reducing Crime

Employment is a critical dimension of successful offender rehabilitation and is associated with lower rates of re-offending; higher wages are associated with lower rates of criminal activity⁷. Dollar for dollar, investments in effective police practices reduce crime more than imprisonment⁸. Educational and training programs that address fundamental abilities and teach skills directly applicable to the job market contribute to successful reintegration of offenders into society and reduce recidivism⁹.

III. Evidence Based Practices - MPRI Works to Reduce Crime:

Prisoners who have access to resources for meaningful transition plans return to prison much less frequently than those who don't. The Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) has increased the success rate of former prisoners¹⁰. Historically, five of every ten prisoners in Michigan returned to prison within three years; since the MPRI began, this has already improved to fewer than four in ten returning within three years, even though the full MPRI model had not been implemented yet for any of the parolees who have already been out of prison for three years.

- Parolees with new sentences have fallen to the lowest rate since 2005, with 98 per 1,000 returning to prison for a new crime.
- Parolee technical returns to prison have fallen to the lowest rate since records were first tracked in 1992, with 89 per 1,000 returning to prison for a technical violation.
- The overall parole revocation rate has fallen to its lowest level since records were first tracked in 1992, with a return rate of 188 per 1,000 parolees.

These performance measures show improvement in spite of the number of parolees under supervision increasing from 17,000 to over 20,000.

IV. The Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative: Description

Michigan's approach to reduce crime by former prisoners who are re-entering society aligns three major national paradigms on how to develop and fully implement a comprehensive model of prisoner transition planning. As a result, the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI)

represents a synergistic model for prisoner re-entry that is deeply influenced by the nation's best thinkers on how to improve former prisoners' success.

The MPRI is now implemented in all of Michigan's 83 counties through 18 regional community sites. Funding for Fiscal Year 2010 is recommended at \$57 million. The rapid growth of the MPRI is a tribute to the leadership and management expertise of hundreds of individuals in Michigan and across the country who have worked tirelessly for the past 6 years to develop and implement the MPRI Model.

To develop the MPRI Model, Michigan had the tremendous benefit of technical assistance grants from the National Governors Association (NGA) and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) that provide substantial resources for consultation, research, training, and technical assistance. The MPRI Model:

- Begins with the three-phase re-entry approach of the Department of Justice's Serious and Violent Offender ReEntry Initiative (SVORI).
- Further delineates the transition process by adding the seven decision points of the National Institute of Corrections' Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI) model.
- Incorporated into its approach the policy statements and recommendations from the Report of the ReEntry Policy Council that is coordinated by the Council of State Governments.

Michigan is showing early success in our crime fighting efforts due to the leadership provided from Governor Jennifer M. Granholm and her Corrections Director, Patricia L. Caruso, an evidence based policy framework, and the essential ingredient of strong and organized community buy in.

The **VISION** of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative is that every inmate released from prison will have the tools needed to succeed in the community. The **MISSION** of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative is to reduce crime by implementing a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each offender—delivered through state and local collaboration—from the time of their entry to prison through their transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community. The **GOALS** of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative are to:

- **Promote public safety** by reducing the threat of harm to persons and their property by released offenders in the communities to which those offenders return.
- **Increase success rates of offenders** who transition from prison by fostering effective risk management and treatment programming, offender accountability, and community and victim participation.

The MPRI Model involves improved decision making at seven critical decision points in the three phases of the custody, release, and community supervision/discharge process.

PHASE ONE—GETTING READY: The **institutional phase** describes the details of events and responsibilities which occur during the offender’s imprisonment from admission until the point of the parole decision and involves the first two major decision points:

1. **Assessment and classification:** Measuring the offender’s risks, needs, and strengths.
2. **Prisoner programming:** Assignments to reduce risk, address need, and build on strengths.

PHASE TWO—GOING HOME: The **transition to the community or re-entry phase** begins approximately six months before the offender’s target release date. In this phase, highly specific re-entry plans are organized that address housing, employment, and services to address addiction and mental illness. Phase Two involves the next two major decision points:

3. **Prisoner release preparation:** Developing a strong, public-safety-conscious parole plan.
4. **Release decision making:** Improving parole release guidelines.

PHASE THREE—STAYING HOME: The **community and discharge phase** begins when the prisoner is released from prison and continues until discharge from community parole supervision. In this phase, it is the responsibility of the former prisoner, human services providers, and the offender’s network of community supports and mentors to assure continued success. Phase Three involves the final three major decision points of the transition process:

5. **Supervision and services:** Providing flexible and firm supervision and services.
6. **Revocation decision making:** Using graduated sanctions to respond to behavior.
7. **Discharge and aftercare:** Determining community responsibility to “take over” the case.

1. The Comprehensive Prisoner ReEntry Plan

Community leaders serve on the Steering Teams in local MPRI sites. These Steering Teams are responsible for developing and reaching consensus in a collaborative manner a local, community-based Comprehensive Prisoner ReEntry Plan that is submitted to the Administrative Agency’s Governing Body for approval. The Plan must address 16 service areas such as housing, employment, substance abuse services, mental health, transportation, victim services, and the involvement of local law enforcement and faith-based institutions. For each of these 16 service areas, the Comprehensive Plan describes the local assets that are in place to increase the potential for success for former prisoners, barriers that impede maximum use of these assets, gaps in services, and proposed solutions to address the barriers and gaps. Thus, the plan builds upon existing services and embeds their use within the context of comprehensive service delivery.

The Comprehensive Plan also addresses critical issues such as case management approaches for accountability, monitoring, and performance measurement and ways to educate the public about the crime-fighting goals of the MPRI. The Comprehensive Plan is the basis for requests to the Michigan Department of Corrections for annual MPRI funding as well as requests for support from federal, other state, local and foundation funding sources.

Local collaboration is at the heart of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative and the MPRI Model. Collaboration requires stakeholders to meet and to make decisions together. This is different than cooperation, which can be done in isolated silos by simply sharing decisions. MPRI requires a full participatory process in order to change the way the public views, accepts, and responds to former

prisoners within the context of the local justice system – that is now more participatory and transparent. It is only through full community participation in this collaborative work that we will be able to sustain the model when the initiative phase of our work concludes in 2011.

2. The MPRI Application for Funds

Each year, the local MPRI site Administrative Agency submits the collaboratively-developed and approved Application for Funds to the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). This application identifies where State funds will be used to implement the local Comprehensive Prisoner ReEntry Plan. The annual Application for MPRI Funds details the costs to implement the proposed solutions in priority service areas as described in the Comprehensive Plan. The MDOC thus provides both a policy framework and a funding stream for the work that, in the final analysis, is all local.

3. MPRI Public Education and Outreach

Nothing can be more important to taking MPRI up to scale than continual public education to change public perception about prisoners returning to our communities. Taxpayers must recognize identifying the need for services and provision of services as public protection strategies - not as coddling convicts. This requires an enormous dedication of purpose that must be carefully developed, implemented, managed, monitored and reported upon. The role of the Administrative Agency, its board, the Steering Team and the MPRI staff in the development of the MPRI Public Education Plan and its implementation is essential.

Administrative boards comprised of elected and other officials offer many avenues to educate the public and special stakeholder groups. Fundamental to full community support, for example, is the support of law enforcement officials such as chiefs of police, sheriffs and prosecutors who dedicate their careers to fighting crime. Their involvement on the local Steering Team and participation in the development and the execution of the Public Education Plan is essential to gain and sustain their on-going support.

When considering implementation of the Public Education Plan, the differences in the roles of local MPRI leadership and the community coordinator must be clear. The community coordinator is charged with *leading the development* of the plan and community leaders should be designated, along with the coordinator, to *implement* that plan, including activities such as meeting with key stakeholder groups, legislators, the media, etc., is important. Any one specific local stakeholder – be it the community coordinator or any one of the four co-chairs - are not to be the sole or primary spokesperson for MPRI. There should be a wide variety of persons tasked with this responsibility.

4. The Local MPRI Steering Team

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2009, Steering Teams were approved by the MPRI Administrative Agency Governing Body as an advisory team invested with the responsibilities and authority designated by the MDOC contract. Broad based and inclusive efforts to receive nominations for Steering Team members are open and transparent.

The primary and essential role of the MPRI Steering Team, led by the group's four co-chairs, is to design the Comprehensive Prisoner ReEntry Plan and monitor its implementation. It is the responsibility of Steering Team members to attend Steering Team meetings as representatives of their service area and to bring to the table the advice, concerns and input of their stakeholders. Thus, two critical expectations of the Steering Team are that members have the knowledge and expertise of the service area they represent and that they represent their networks, not just their own organizations. The four co-chairs must ensure a robust process for the design of the plan by the Steering Team. Steering Team meetings should be focused on planning, monitoring and reporting.

The MPRI Model requires that service areas critical to former prisoners' success are fully represented on the local Steering Team. The national research is clear on the types of services that are essential and, therefore, the specialty areas that should be represented on the team who can bring their expertise and experience to the table to design a functional and sound comprehensive reentry plan. One of the key outcomes of a truly collaborative process is the absence of duplication and an ability to use existing services whenever possible so that MPRI funding is reserved for the gaps in existing services. For example, public funding streams for employment, housing, substance and mental health services are already targeted by many funding sources for the former prisoner population and efforts to tap into these streams should be maximized. Having individuals who are experienced in these service areas in terms of policies, processes, programs, funding opportunities, and the evaluation of effective approaches is essential to the local MPRI process:

- *Employment.* Employment is a critical dimension of successful prisoner reentry and is associated with lower rates of re-offending; higher wages are associated with lower rates of criminal activity¹¹.
- *Health care.* The prevalence of severe mental disorders and chronic infectious disease among the prison population is far greater than among the general population¹² and prisoners tend to face limited access to community-based health care upon release.¹³
- *Housing.* The immediate challenge faced by releasing prisoners to secure housing is a process that is often complicated by a host of factors: the scarcity of affordable and available housing, legal barriers and regulations, prejudices that restrict tenancy, strict eligibility requirements for federally-subsidized housing, and research shows that released prisoners who lack stable housing are more likely to return to prison,¹⁴ suggesting that the obstacles to temporary and permanent housing warrant the attention of policymakers, practitioners and researchers.
- *Substance abuse and mental health.* These issues among former prisoners present significant challenges to the reentry process. Studies indicate that while 83% of state prisoners have a history of drug use, only a small fraction receive treatment while incarcerated and after release and that few who had access to, and took advantage of, treatment programs in prison continue to receive appropriate treatment once they return to the community¹⁵ even though prison-based drug treatment has shown success in reducing drug use and criminal activity, especially when coupled with aftercare treatment in the community.¹⁶

- *Family relationships and pro-social support.* The impact of incarceration and reentry on children and families is significant since the family structure, financial responsibilities, emotional support systems, and living arrangements can be affected; incarceration can drastically disrupt spousal relationships, parent-child relationships, and family networks;¹⁷ and restoring these relationships upon release poses a unique set of challenges.
- *Employment readiness.* Educational and training programs that address fundamental abilities and teach skills directly applicable to the job market contribute to successful reintegration of offenders into society¹⁸ and reduce recidivism.
- In addition to service areas, the critical input of *local law enforcement officials, victim rights advocates and faith based organizations* is required in order to add balance to the comprehensive plan and public education efforts.

The strength of support from these local leaders will help sustain the MPRI Model once the six year “implementation phase” of our efforts has concluded in 2011 and these efforts will no longer be called an “initiative” as we will have changed the way we do business.

Input from experienced service providers is expected and very important. In many communities, they are some of the most knowledgeable individuals because they are “in the trenches” doing the work. However, beginning in FY 2009, Steering Team membership should not include service providers who participate in the local competitive bidding process for MPRI funds and thus have a fiscal relationship with the Administrative Agency to provide MPRI services to parolees¹. The appearance of a conflict of interest is simply too strong to overwhelm the need for their input to the process.

Given the experience and expertise of human service providers, local Administrative Agencies are encouraged to form a formal service provider advisory committee—including those providers who contract with MPRI—to seek their input on the Comprehensive Plan.² Advice by service providers should be a component of the local Advisory Council process that is designed for key stakeholder input regularly to the Steering Team. The Service Provider group should be an important committee of the Advisory Council which will allow their organized and regular input to the local MPRI process. Another option is to have the service provider group report directly to the Steering Team on a regular basis. Either way, a significant and critical role should exist for service providers to offer their observations and advice on to best get the job done.

Steering Teams have four designated Co-chairs: a member who represents the Administrative Agency, a community-based member who represents the local MPRI Advisory Council, the Warden of the local prison that houses MPRI prisoners and who leads the prison’s MPRI Facility Coordination Team, and a local management-level representative from Field Operations Administration (FOA), who leads the local FOA Coordination Team. The MDOC appoints the

¹ Law enforcement and other agencies which do not bid for services as they are sole source contracts are exempt from this restriction

² In some sparsely populated rural areas, it may not be possible to restrict MPRI contractors from being members of the Steering Team. This issue can be addressed with some flexibility on a case-by-case basis.

Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA) and FOA representatives to the Steering Team. The FOA Steering Team Co-chair works with local Steering Teams to determine the involvement of their staff in the local efforts pertaining to comprehensive planning, implementation and feedback about the effectiveness of the programs that are chosen as contractors in the comprehensive plan due to the critical need for complete “buy in” to the MPRI process. This cross-pollination of the community, the Administrative Agency, the Advisory Council, the prison and FOA assures balanced leadership of the Steering Team with input from key players in the process.

An MDOC representative seated on the governing body of the Administrative Agency assures that Steering Team issues in the local process will be addressed. It is required that the Steering Team Co-chairs and the Community Coordinator have an active role in the review of proposals submitted for funding. Others, as agreed to by the Co-chairs may serve on the proposal review committee. The local MPRI Community Coordinator acts as staff to the Steering Team as an employee or contractor of the Administrative Agency. As such, it is required that the Steering Team Co-chairs work with the Administrative Agency collaboratively to select and hire the Community Coordinator as part of the standard personnel hiring process of the Administrative Agency.

5. The Administrative Agency and its Governing Body

The primary role of the Administrative Agency is to provide the administrative support for MPRI in local sites. This support includes coordinating the competitive bid process, assuring that subcontracts are in place in a timely manner, providing liability coverage, collecting data and monitoring, evaluating and reporting on sub-contractor performance as part of a collaborative effort with Steering Team Co-chairs. The Administrative Agency is responsible for submitting the local Comprehensive Plan and annual Application for Funds developed by the MPRI Steering Team and approved by the Administrative Agency’s Governing Body.

The Administration Agency’s Governing Body “control” funding as the final decision for contracts rests with the Governing Body. This decision-making authority must be informed and driven by the MPRI comprehensive planning process. However, the Steering Team is responsible for the development of the comprehensive prisoner reentry plan. The two bodies must work together, using the local planning and authorization process, to produce an approved plan and arrive at agreement on the results of the competitive bid process. The role of the local Governing Body in the MPRI is to assure the process for developing the Comprehensive Plan and Application for Funds is collaborative. Thus, the seating on the Governing Body of a member who represents the MDOC – one of the two MDOC Co-chairs of the Steering Team – is critical. It is expected that an MDOC designee will represent the MPRI on the Board³

The Governing Body has three options for their review and decisions relative to the comprehensive prisoner reentry plan and MPRI funding based on the recommendations of the Steering Team they have appointed for these purposes: 1) Accept the Steering Team recommendations in total, 2) Reject the Steering Team recommendations in total and refer them back to the Steering Team for

³ It is understood that in some rare circumstances, the seating of specific representatives on the Administrative Agency’s Governing Body as contemplated here may not be possible and that alternative methods of involvement may be needed on a case-by-case basis. For example, some Administrative Agencies are governmental or quasi-governmental entities and have their board membership mandated by law – for example Workforce Development Boards of MWAs and county government agencies.

further work, or 3) Approve some of the recommendations and send the disapproved items back to the Steering Team for additional work.

The Governing Body does not have the authority to change the Comprehensive Plan or to change the results of the competitive bid process in any substantial way without the concurrence of the Steering Team which the Administrative Agency's Governing Body has approved to take responsibility for the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan in such a way that the Board will approve it. It is essential in this process that the Governing Board and the Steering Team co-chairs meet to discuss expectations.

While it is not expected due to the clear expectations about collaboration between the Governing Board and the Steering Team, if a circumstance arises where there is continued disagreement after all local efforts at drafting and re-drafting have been exhausted, the MDOC is often called on to assist in facilitating an agreement. If the Administrative Agency is managing well the local collaborative process, disagreements will never rise to this level. The fact that a Steering Team co-chair sits on the Governing Body all but assures an uneventful process.

Once approved by the Governing Body, the Administrative Agency is responsible for submitting the application to the Michigan Department of Corrections. The Administrative Agency, in collaboration with the MPRI Steering Team, is also responsible for and expected to develop and submit applications for federal, state, local and foundation funding that will further the implementation of the local Comprehensive Plan and to work with other agencies in the community who wish to raise funds for MPRI services.

The Administrative Agency is also responsible for meeting the obligations of the contract with the State as a result of funding provided based on the annual Application for MPRI Funds, and will make sure the following occur:

- Coordinating an open and competitive bid process for the services detailed in the Comprehensive Plan;
- Issuing contracts in a timely manner based on successful bids;
- When necessary and appropriate, advance payments to contractors as allowed by the Administrative Agencies rules and regulations;
- Program and fiscal monitoring and reporting to ensure program fidelity and contract compliance;
- The appointment of a management-level staff person to the Steering Team as a Co-chair to work collaboratively with the team;
- In collaboration with the Steering Team Co-chairs, the hiring of or contracting with a full time, dedicated MPRI Community Coordinator or similarly titled position with the skills and competencies needed and who, if an employee, is 100% dedicated to the work of the MPRI, or, if a contractor, has a contract which includes outcome measures designed to cover all the requirements of the Community Coordinator position as listed in this document under "The Role of the Community Coordinator";
- Ensuring that subcontractor client data systems are consistent with policies and procedures set by the State;

- Ensuring that subcontractor accounting procedures are consistent with policies and procedures set by the State;
- Submitting monthly summary invoices to the State according to policies and procedures set by the State;
- Submitting monthly reports as described by the State;
- Conducting a yearly on-site review of each subcontractor's operations and fiscal administration;
- Participating in semi-annual program reviews as prescribed by the State;
- Participating in trainings held by the statewide MPRI partners;
- With the Steering Team, participating in the public education and outreach effort;
- Working with the Steering Team, their boards, elected officials and other key stakeholders – especially the law enforcement community – to develop and maintain support for the MPRI as outlined in the MPRI Public Education and Outreach Plan.
- Providing office space, phone, computer and supplies for dedicated MPRI staff as appropriate and allowed; and
- Ensuring that all communications regarding the MPRI are productive and open and result in clarity of the goals, objectives and processes that comprise the MPRI.

6. The Role of the Local MPRI Community Coordinator

Community Coordinators are the essential staff to the MPRI process at each site. The Community Coordinators can be employees or contractors of the Administrative Agencies or employees or contractors of third-party agencies. The Community Coordinators are responsible for staffing the Steering Team and assisting with the development and implementation of the locally-approved Comprehensive Plans. Their responsibilities include coordinating and monitoring the use of Comprehensive Plan funds, the effectiveness of the service delivery system, outreach to and education of the public, and collaboration with service providers, justice system professionals and the public.

While each Steering Team and Administrative Agency is encouraged to design locally-specific approaches to these general areas of performance, it is the essential responsibility of the Community Coordinators to coordinate the local MPRI process. Therefore, all duties performed by the Community Coordinator must be focused on MPRI and, given the competencies required to meet this responsibility, the staff must be at a professional level and be remunerated commensurate with the high expectations for comprehensive planning, public education design and execution, and management responsibilities.

Community Coordinators must be clear about how Administrative Agencies will support them in meeting performance objectives and how the performance and quality of the work is to be implemented, managed, monitored, evaluated and reported. While Community Coordinators may have titles that are reflective of other staff in Administrative Agencies' personnel and contracting structure, if employees, they must be full-time employees dedicated to the MPRI process. The MDOC includes in their annual contracts adequate funds for this purpose. The essence of MPRI is local decision making, and that local decision making must be highly coordinated, highly

collaborative, dedicated to high-quality performance, documented, and the subject of clear communication. This is why the role of the Community Coordinators is so crucial to the process.

It is critical to the success of the MPRI that the Community Coordinators are provided continual education and training. This includes formal training events – which must be informed by experience of the Community Coordinators – as well as regular statewide capacity building meetings to discuss what they are learning at the local level.

7. MPRI Prison Facility Coordination Team

The primary role of the MPRI Prison Facility Coordination Team is to assure that the MPRI Model for Phase I and Phase II is implemented in the local prison facility. The team's membership includes the Warden of the facility (or his/her designee) who sits as the Steering Team Co-chair, the MPRI Facility Coordinator, and other CFA staff that have direct responsibility over the programming and implementation of MPRI in the facility. In general, the primary issues which need to be addressed, consistent with the approved Comprehensive Community Corrections Plan and in collaboration with the local Steering Team include, but are not limited to:

- Assessment and classification: Measuring the offender's risks, needs, and strengths;
- Prisoner programming: Assignments to reduce risk, address need, and build on strengths;
- Prisoner release preparation: Developing a strong, public-safety-conscious parole plan.

8. MPRI FOA Coordination Team

The primary role of the MPRI FOA Coordination Team is to assure that the MPRI Model is fully implemented locally. The FOA team will be led by the local FOA representative who sits as the Steering Team Co-chair. It will have in its membership, MPRI agents (from the field and facility), local supervisor(s) and other FOA staff as appropriate to address local issues and needs consistent with the approved Comprehensive Community Corrections Plan and in collaboration with the local Steering Team. These responsibilities in general include, but are not limited to:

- Supervision and services: Providing flexible and firm supervision and services;
- Revocation decision making: Using graduated sanctions to respond to behavior; and,
- Discharge and aftercare: Working collaboratively to ensure that an appropriate transition plan in place when the MDOC role is over due to the discharge of the former prisoner from parole supervision.

9. Leadership Development and Capacity Building: Defining and Sharing What Works

The MDOC will provide opportunities for Administrative Agency Directors, Steering Team co-chairs, and Community Coordinators and other designated local MPRI staff to meet on a regular basis as professionals engaged in this difficult work. All local stakeholders can benefit from meeting regularly and sharing ideas and successful and unsuccessful approaches to their work; advise on the training that is needed, the timing of training and the content; and to keep up to date on the news of statewide MPRI business, as well as to simply provide an opportunity for fellowship.

The Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency - MDOC's contractor for capacity building - is responsible for coordinating and staffing these meetings and making certain the most informed 'best practices' stakeholders are invited to attend. In terms of process, all of the local and state stakeholders will be polled regularly for their ideas on topic areas and appropriate audiences for these capacity building sessions and the meetings will be designed accordingly to be inclusive and issue oriented.

10. The Local MPRI Advisory Council

Advisory Councils are being put into place at each MPRI community site to create a strong base for community support and to act as a vehicle for public education. In response to the MPRI Model, many MPRI community sites have already developed such local councils whose members have a shared interest in the success of the initiative. Those involved in these groups are often local citizens who lack the time or the position to be involved in day-to-day operations or to be involved in the Steering Team. Often they are family members of prisoners, local faith-based members, victims of crime, or retired corrections or justice officials who simply want a formal way to be involved and show their support. And, as stated, the Advisory Council represents an opportunity for service provider input to the process, especially through a specifically named committee of the Council.

These groups are not intended to be as “staff intensive” as the Steering Teams as they would likely need to meet less regularly, for example as part of an annual public event where the successes of the local MPRI are highlighted and positive press is generated. Many non-profit boards have these types of events every year.

As local Advisory Councils have evolved, their primary role is to inform a broad base of stakeholders about the development and implementation of MPRI in the local community as a means to generate broad-based public support and as a forum for essential public education about the MPRI. Within this role, it is the responsibility of the Advisory Council members to attend Advisory Council meetings and participate in reaching out to the public at-large to educate them about MPRI in their community. The primary expectation of the Advisory Council is that members are interested in understanding MPRI and will share their knowledge of MPRI within their network. Ideally, the chairperson of the local MPRI Advisory Council sits as a Co-chair on the Steering Team and would be a community- or faith-based representative with no financial interest in the Comprehensive Prisoner ReEntry Plan. If the local Steering Teams currently includes a community advocate who don't meet this guideline, there is no need to change, but efforts should be made to do so at the appropriate time.

V. Working with the Faith Community: Evidence Based Principles to Guide the Process

Research shows that one of the most effective ways to reduce criminogenic tendencies is through strong family ties and pro-social activities¹⁹. Unifying efforts and expanding the number of individuals from the faith community working with those affected by the criminal justice system is having an incredible impact on crime reduction and personal transformation – but more can be done. Accomplishing greater achievements in this critical collaboration requires expanded and

intentional collaboration between the faith-based community and the criminal justice system, which will be unique in both a state and national context.

There are five guiding principles for expanding positive collaboration between the faith community and the MPRI that create a roadmap for action. These have been developed as a result of conversations with the faith community and national, state and local MPRI partners. The guidelines express how to build healing communities, network for advocacy, and provide social services:

- 1. Build Opportunities for Strengthening Pro-Social Support through Healing Communities:* Communities of faith can be a powerful force in the lives of returning citizens by providing pro-social support through mentoring relationships. These activities can greatly improve the chances of successful reintegration of former prisoners into the local communities.
- 2. Assist Those Left Behind by Working with Families to Strengthen Family Networks:* Faith-based organizations also can strengthen connections between former prisoners and their families, or build new “extended family networks” when family bridges are burned or nonproductive.
- 3. Address the Consequences of Crime by Working with Victims & Promoting Restorative Justice:* Faith-based organizations should respond to the consequences of crime by assisting victims. A faith-based focus on forgiveness, reconciliation, redemption and restoration creates an ideal backdrop for this work.
- 4. Build the Station of Hope Network to Enhance Effective Collaboration and Advocacy:* Connecting existing networks of faith-based organizations is critical to enhancing a sense of unity for diverse organizations addressing issues related to returning prisoners. The power of these entities working together can positively impact key policy issues in the criminal justice system. Enhanced public education and awareness of challenges within the system are also a benefit to networking for advocacy.
- 5. Build Capacity for Improved Performance-Driven Contracting:* Training and capacity building support should be made available for faith-based organizations that want to address the needs of returning prisoners. Training will allow them to compete successfully with more experienced community-based organizations. Considerations include anticipating potential challenges faced by newly developing organizations and guiding faith-based organizations to understand the language of government contracts and the requirements that often accompany them.

Building Healing Communities

Prisoners may enter incarceration with varying degrees of cognitive deficits that influence criminal thinking and behavior, such as pro-criminal attitudes, pro-criminal associates and impulsivity. Furthermore, while incarcerated, individuals may develop coping skills for the prison environment that are not appropriate on the outside. Examples include social withdrawal, dependence on institutional structure, and adherence to exploitative norms of prison culture. If, upon return to the

community, individuals resume their former lifestyles with the same pro-criminal associates, it is likely only a matter of time before they commit another crime.

Unfortunately, this is most often the case. More than two-thirds of people released from prisons are rearrested for new offenses within three years of their release, and more than half return to prison for committing new crimes or violating the conditions of their release.²⁰ It is essential, then, to reverse these negative cognitive deficits and social effects by creating environments where healthy, pro-social interaction is modeled and where prisoners, former prisoners, their families and victims can practice a new way of thinking and acting.

Worshipping communities are a natural environment for reinforcing pro-social behaviors necessary for positive reentry. Whether through prayer, religious study, planned social activities, volunteering in the community, or simply through companionship, faith-based institutions work hard to improve the social environment, both for their members and their broader communities. Based on this experience, faith-based institutions may be able to affect returning prisoners in ways that other programs do not. Faith communities can help create the conditions for personal transformation, provide inspiration, and motivate individuals to achieve individual goals. Witnessing others who have faced similar challenges and succeeded, talking about personal issues, forming relationships with a group of peers, and gaining a sense of religious faith or other forms of inspiration, may enhance an individual's mental resolve to complete substance abuse treatment, to get a job, or to peacefully manage family conflicts²¹.

Worshipping communities are also an innate environment for establishing positive mentoring relationships. Clergy create relationships with their congregants to lead them in a fruitful faith journey, small faith groups build strong connections with one another in order to accomplish their mission, and many congregations have more formal mentoring 'ministries,' such as after-school tutoring programs in order to improve the success of community members. It seems natural, therefore, for faith-based institutions to mentor returning citizens since they are potentially some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.

With proper training, Michigan congregations can enhance a successful community reentry through intentional mentoring relationships with this target population. Some faith-based organizations have already developed trainings for their congregations. While often very good, they have been to this point fairly limited in scope and size. For newly interested congregations, developing new trainings may be a major roadblock to initiating their interests. Moreover, congregations may be reticent to mentor this population without outside support.

Fortunately, an excellent training curriculum was developed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation for congregations interested in mentoring this special population. Already, it has been successfully implemented in a number of pilot sites, including Detroit. This curriculum, "*Healing Communities*" prepares congregations to better understand and address the challenges faced by those imprisoned and those reintegrating back into the community. The training also challenges us to understand how building a "Healing Community" requires us to nurture and support both the family and the victims of crime.

VI. MPRI Impact and Performance Measures: Preliminary Evaluation

The MPRI began its work on evaluation and performance monitoring by focusing on parole failures and returns to prison. In 2008, as plans were being made to improve the evaluation approach by examining arrest and convictions of former prisoners, a national peer review was held and experienced and highly respected researchers from across the country were brought together and asked to comment on the preliminary approach to evaluating the MPRI and to make recommendations on how to improve the approach. As a result, a “learning site” model has been developed that will examine the success of former prisoners one community site at a time.

1. Preliminary Evaluation Approach and Result

The Implementation Schedule for the MPRI Model: The planning for MPRI was launched in October, 2003 beginning with a complete review of the research on what works to reduce crime and culminating in a strategy for building a statewide, seamless system of risk-reduction services and supervision for every prisoner. A tremendous amount of work has been accomplished, putting Michigan on target to bring MPRI up-to-scale by 2010 in accordance with the original implementation plan. Three issues regarding the implementation of the MPRI need to be clear in order to understand the process that was followed:

A. The Order of the Phased Implementation: Phase II and Phase III, and then Phase I:

Full implementation of the MPRI Model requires enormous changes in the way the Michigan Department of Corrections and the State of Michigan as a whole conduct the business of criminal justice and corrections, including building new relationships with communities statewide and redefining the way the Department collaborates with other state agencies and local communities to improve public safety. Consistent with the original implementation plan, early planning and implementation efforts focused heavily on *Phase II: Going Home* (preparation immediately prior to release, including community in-reach) and *Phase III: Staying Home* (community-based services and supervision).

As acknowledged in the MPRI Model, prison programming and re-entry preparation starting at reception (Phase I) are key elements for success. However, to have the greatest, most immediate impact on recidivism, the research has demonstrated that maximum impact on risk reduction is made through community-based interventions. So, that is where the work was started. By leveraging the growing momentum and enthusiasm for improving prisoner re-entry in communities across the state, an early focus on community organizing and local capacity building promised and delivered an immediate impact on offender success early in our implementation efforts. As a result, the implementation of the MPRI has been in stages. First, Phases II and III, and then Phase I.

B. Pilot Sites, Followed by Statewide Implementation, Then “Up to Scale”:

Concurrently, efforts have been underway to first gradually take the initiative “statewide” (meaning every county is covered) and then in FY2010, take it “up to scale” (meaning every prisoner is assessed at reception under the MPRI Model).

The Department promised and delivered a commitment to success and took the collaborative, community-based planning model *statewide* in three years, so that by October, 2007 every jurisdiction in the state had the MPRI capability.

During the next two years (2009-2010), the Department is committed to taking the MPRI Model *up to scale* and implementing all phases of the model with all offenders – as appropriate for each individual’s risk and needs. Accomplishing this degree of comprehensive systems change – while maintaining a focus on quality assurance and continuous quality improvement – requires a thoughtful implementation plan with a realistic timeline.

C. Special Populations:

Special populations in prison (youth, boot camp, developmentally disabled prisoners, etc.) will be implemented one population at a time since they cannot be moved to facilities closer to their homes for Phase II.

2. The Need for Immediate Impact on Recidivism and Preliminary Tracking of MPRI Outcomes

The Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) was born at least in part out of necessity. Michigan’s prison population grew by 2,142 inmates in 2002, continuing 19 consecutive years of annual growth that nearly tripled the number of incarcerated offenders in the State prison system from year-end 1983 to year-end 2002. The forecast was for more of the same through 2003 and beyond unless decisive action was taken. Available prison capacity had dwindled to 838 unoccupied beds, representing only 1.7% of the total net operating capacity of more than 50,000 beds. The prison system was projected to run out of beds within 9 months based on current trends at the time. Unabated growth of this magnitude could not be accommodated either by the prison beds that remained in reserve or by the State budget that was facing a multi-million dollar deficit in FY 2003.

Due to the necessity of taking actions that would have an immediate impact on this pattern of population growth, intensive efforts were made to identify and take advantage of measures that had the potential to quickly and safely yield fewer parole failures and revocations (especially as part of the “low hanging fruit” of the launching of the MPRI) and thus help to control prison growth. As a part of that, the Department essentially began implementing some of the components of the MPRI Model even while the full Model was still being designed and built.

The focus on Phases II and III for prisoners approaching eligibility for parole was a natural starting point under the circumstances, rather than starting with Phase I at reception for prisoners who had yet to serve their full minimum sentences in secure prisons before parole eligibility.

Efforts such as these to begin controlling prison population growth while maintaining and even improving public safety were successful, as Michigan’s prison population decreased by 902 inmates during 2003-2004. There have been some sizable swings both up and down in the total number of prisoners during the 3 subsequent years because of several dynamic circumstances and events that

have occurred, but the prison population has uncharacteristically been basically flat for the past five years on the whole since the genesis of the MPRI.

At the end of calendar year 2007, there were only 744 more State prisoners than there had been at the end of 2002 (an average annual growth of about 150 during 2003-2007 versus average annual growth of 1,925 that occurred during 1984-2002. This has been a tremendous achievement, and the preponderance of evidence certainly indicates that the MPRI, while not the only factor, has been a significant contributor to prison population reduction.

A key issue from day one of the planning for MPRI has, of course, been to monitor and assess the effects on prison population as a result of its effect on recidivism and public safety. The MPRI has been expected to improve public safety and reduce the need for prison beds in two ways:

1. Improvement in parolee and discharged offender success following release, through reductions in violation behavior and new crime – meaning, in turn, fewer victims and therefore fewer returns to prison for either technical violations of the conditions of supervision or new sentences.
2. Gradual increases in the parole approval rate, as a direct result of better parolee success brought about by the improvements in risk reduction and management, parole planning, offender supervision, community engagement in collaborative case management, and access to services and effective treatment. Demonstrated success in these areas is increasing Parole Board confidence in release outcomes and resulting in a greater willingness to consider releases to effective parole supervision settings and strategies.

The overall evaluation effort is to include both summative and formative components: that is, it will work to provide detailed assessment of not only the outcomes but also a comprehensive review of how well the MPRI model is being implemented with fidelity across the different sites and timeframes. Thus, the comprehensive evaluation will answer questions not only about WHAT happened to MPRI participants, but also WHY and HOW those results were achieved.

This is an unavoidably long-term comprehensive evaluation effort, just like the implementation of the full MPRI model itself. First up is a thorough process evaluation of the implementation of the MPRI as the model's phases and components are brought on-line and fully implemented with fidelity over time. Then, before definitive outcome evaluation results can be obtained:

- All phases of the MPRI model must be in place and the new way of doing business must have an opportunity to mature,
- Expanded, integrated data systems must be fully developed to completely capture both the implementation measures and the intermediate outcome measures of the MRPI, and
- MPRI participants who have benefited from exposure to the full MPRI model must be released back to their home communities with an adequate and standardized follow-up period to reliably gauge the outcome results relative to expectations.

3. Some Principal Weaknesses & Limitations of the Preliminary Tracking Methodology

It is the Department's position that the month-to-month tracking of recidivism outcomes for individual MPRI offender release cohorts (who have gradually benefited from implementation of more and more of the components of the full MPRI model), along with comparison to baseline recidivism data from a typical recent year, is actually a creative approach that takes outcome measurement about as far as is feasible right now – in the early stages of implementation of the full MPRI Model. The tracking methodology controls for what we know to be some of the most important potential confounding variables – such as time at risk, prior parole failure, and mental illness. The current approach provides tracking data in a reliable manner, a task it performs quite admirably.

At the same time, the Department has no illusions about the weaknesses and limitations of the current approach:

- This initial effort is essentially an ex-post-facto design with numerous potential confounders for which sufficient controls have not yet been imposed.
- The current recidivism measure – return to prison – is rather one-dimensional, and though it adequately reflects offender behaviors that rise to the level of necessitating re-incarceration in a State prison, there are broader measures such as verifiable arrests leading to convictions, and other sanctions such as jail time that, once available in a reliable and timely manner, would more comprehensively capture the full extent of any victimization caused by released offenders in the community.
- Time at risk is currently neither sufficiently long nor standardized enough to begin to draw anything other than preliminary conclusions about recidivism findings.
- Considerably more data collection and process evaluation will be necessary to describe and assess the nature, extent and fidelity of implementation of the MPRI Model within the Department, within other partnering state agencies and organizations, and at the local community level.
- There is a great deal of variability across the MPRI sites with regard to all manner of local differences – such as evolution and status of community corrections, existing processes for and degree of implementation of MPRI principles and features (e.g., collaborative case management), gaps and barriers to capacity and delivery of relevant services, comprehensiveness and consistency of automated data collection, and baseline recidivism outcomes.
- We can not yet establish an empirical link between observed outcomes and MPRI processes, activities and spending. A major example of that is the need to first establish a link between the efforts under the MPRI to address criminogenic needs and the impact on intermediate outcomes such as employment, housing, and successful treatment.

Nevertheless, even given weaknesses and limitations such as these, there is every reason to believe that changes in the way the Department does business – brought about by actions taken to adhere to the principles and implement the components of the MPRI Model – are contributing significantly to observed differences in outcomes, even though we cannot yet establish the causal links between them. We believe that the early evidence supports three propositions:

1. Real changes in policies and processes are occurring within and outside the Department and at the local community level as the result of MPRI, and those changes are consistent with the best evidence regarding effective practices.
2. Real changes in outcomes are also occurring.
3. There is reason to believe that the changes in outcomes are, at least in substantial part, the result of the changes in practices brought about by the MPRI.

4. Performance Indicators through August 2008:

The MPRI improves Parole Board confidence as it has provided improved resources to the Parole Board, including better training and more sophisticated assessment instruments. The MPRI process reduces and manages risk which, in turn, raises Parole Board confidence in parole plans and outcomes, enabling higher parole approval rates. Improved parole guidelines are being developed as a way to sustain and expand the impact of these improvements. The most recent performance indicators show improvement in spite of the number of parolees under supervision increasing from 17,000 to over 20,000:

- 12,979 MPRI paroles since 2005, and only 2,698 back in prison
- 944 fewer returns to prison than expected under baseline (3,642) when controlling for time at risk and history of prior parole failure
- 26% improvement in total MPRI returns to prison to date against baseline expectations

These results to date for MPRI cases represent early outcomes for offenders who have been out of prison for considerably less than three years for the most part, and yet some of the early systemic changes brought about by the MPRI have already shown an impact on Michigan's 3-year recidivism rates for all parolees.

- Historically, five of every ten prisoners in Michigan returned to prison within three years; since the MPRI began, this has already improved to fewer than four in ten returning within three years, even though the full MPRI model had not been implemented yet for any of the parolees who have already been out of prison for three years.
- Parolees with new sentences have fallen to the lowest rate since 2005, with 98 per 1,000 returning to prison for a new crime.
- Parolee technical returns to prison have fallen to the lowest rate since records were first tracked in 1992, with 89 per 1,000 returning to prison for a technical violation.
- The overall parole revocation rate has fallen to its lowest level since records were first tracked in 1992, with a return rate of 188 per 1,000 parolees.

An important way to measure the impact of the MPRI is to review Parole Board approval rates by offense groups. Recent data indicate:

- Overall parole approval rate is 58.1% - highest since 63.3% in 1993
- Drug offender parole approval rate is 80.6% - highest since 81.6% in 2005
- Other nonviolent offender parole approval rate is 70.8% - highest since 71.1% in 2005
- Assaultive offender parole approval rate is 43.1% - highest since 44.3% in 1999

- Sex offender parole approval rate is 21.0% - highest since 26.6% in 1996 – new risk assessment demonstration project has shown better differentiation in risk levels for this group
- Annual parole revocations are down by 42% since record high year of 2002, despite a 40% increase in size of parole population

5. Next Steps in the Evaluation Process

The basic questions are how to demonstrate full MPRI Model implementation with fidelity, how to continue to improve the monitoring of progress, and how to best measure and record the multiple dimensions of process, impact and outcomes on so complex an enterprise as the MPRI has become.

An important consideration here is to ensure an understanding that the MPRI is not just a linear set of limited steps in the handling of each offender from reception into prison through aftercare in the community following discharge from supervision. Rather, the MPRI is a fundamental shift in every aspect of how the criminal justice system and even the human services system operates in Michigan when dealing with offenders who are released back to the community. More specifically, the MPRI is *not* limited to merely:

- Assessment of risk, criminogenic needs and strengths at prison intake.
- Development of a Transition Accountability Plan for each offender.
- Evidence-based programming while in prison to address risk/needs & build on strengths.
- Community in-reach, as transition from prison back to the home community approaches.
- Collaborative case management during parole supervision.
- Aftercare by individual community support networks following discharge from supervision or discharge on the maximum sentence.

The MPRI is all of these things, but it is also much broader than that. It is a sweeping change from a philosophy of, “Trail them, nail them and jail them,” to a focus on promoting offender success as law-abiding citizens who have the tools necessary to succeed.

Therefore, many of the changes (beyond the list of steps above) that have already been made in offender parole readiness, parole board decision making, parole supervision, revocation policies/practices, community outreach and engagement, expanded violator diversion options, application of reentry principles and practices to existing programs and processes, et cetera, are all part of the MPRI.

The significance of this is that rather than representing a vast sea of confounders to which controls must somehow be imposed to enable isolation of the true effects of the MPRI in a rigorous evaluation, factors such as these are instead additional aspects of the MPRI itself as long as they are consistent with MPRI principles.

It will be very challenging indeed to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all things MPRI, especially as the MPRI is brought up to scale to the point where it is no longer an initiative at all, but instead simply how the Department does business every day with every offender under its jurisdiction.

We have essentially started with “dashboard” indicators, and will have to gradually work toward more rigorous methods as the full MPRI model is brought on-line. Given the need for exhaustive measurement of process, impact, intermediate outcomes and re-victimization of any kind and degree – all beyond our data system capabilities and resources at present – this will likely require designs such as the use of truly matched samples with deep profiling for precise comparisons, and/or case study approaches to provide rich, descriptive context to the outcomes observed and the catalysts of the results.

We look forward to moving forward with next steps on developing an evaluation design that will allow us to conduct a more robust approach to measure not only the impact the MPRI has on the state prison system as a result of improved success rates – that is, reduced returns to prison – but also on the impacts more critical to the community: arrests and convictions. We must recognize that for prosecutors, judges, sheriffs and the community at large, our promise to “make communities safer” is going to be evaluated.

VII. National Evaluation Peer Review

In May 2008, a meeting of nationally-recognized experts in the area of corrections research was convened. This peer review meeting was intended to review current research and reporting efforts and to begin the process of developing a longer-term evaluation strategy. A more detailed summary of the meeting and its outcomes is available as a separate document. Highlights include:

- The openness and transparency of MDOC’s sharing of data and methods is unique in the experience of the participants. The panel was impressed with MDOC’s willingness to “open the books” for review by a panel of experts.
- The panel acknowledged the tracking data as an accurate indicator of failure rates for the baseline and MPRI groups while noting the need for additional research to establish cause for observed differences. The expert panel also acknowledged the importance of controlling for time at risk and prior parole failure, but noted the need for additional controls.
- While there was some discussion about the most appropriate means of reporting, there was acceptance that the tracking data indicate a difference in failure rates between the baseline and MPRI groups.
- There was consensus that recidivism measures need to be broadened to include data on arrests and convictions to achieve a more comprehensive set of indicators of actual behavior on parole.
- There was extensive discussion of what is, and is not, MPRI. The group agreed that MPRI represents far more than a single program, as indicated by the massive number of policy statements and recommendations that represent the entirety of MPRI. Taken as a whole, these statements and recommendations indicate the scope of the system change that will result from MPRI.

- It is critical to continue and expand process measurement to document the ways in which MDOC's management of offenders has changed under MPRI.
- There was a strong sense that evaluation of MPRI would be enhanced by implementing and evaluating the full MPRI model in controlled sites, which would allow for the application of more rigorous methods and better controls over outside factors. In this controlled environment, it will be possible to obtain higher quality information about the impact of MPRI when it is fully implemented. Those results would then be expanded and validated by a system-wide comprehensive evaluation.
- There is a need for a comprehensive evaluation to control for as many potentially confounding factors as possible to establish that changes in outcomes can reliably be attributed to MPRI.
- Given that MPRI is now at the point of going up to scale, the timing is right for conducting the kind of comprehensive evaluation needed to establish the impact of MPRI.

VIII. Fully Implementing the MPRI Model and Evaluating its Impact on Crime: A Learning Site Approach

In 2009, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) will use a learning site approach to fully implement and evaluate the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) Model. The Department is convinced that tremendous learning can come from this intensive implementation approach that can inform both the statewide implementation of the MPRI Model as well as the comprehensive evaluation strategy that will be used to measure the impact of the Model when it is implemented to scale. This approach will provide the evidence that is needed to convince the key stakeholders in the MPRI effort that the Model is sound and that, when fully implemented, it reduces crime.

Launching a learning site in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 will further enhance a smooth transition to a new governor's administration in FY2011. Between FY2009 – FY2011, substantial progress can be made on evaluating the alignment of practice with key elements of the Model and to evaluate the impact of the Model on crime. The Learning Site evaluation will be conducted by a third-party, independent evaluator that will continuously report to stakeholders on the major findings from their process and outcome analysis so that any suggested changes can be implemented and evaluated in real time. During this period, MDOC suggests that data can be captured and analyzed along three key dimensions:

1. *Process Measures* such as the quality of assessment and case plan development and the use of evidence-based programming;
2. *Intermediate Measures* of offender success such as housing attainment, employment, and other services as well as the quality of service delivery;
3. Preliminary findings on several cohorts of former prisoners who transition through the Learning Site against *justice outcomes* such as arrests, convictions, violations and returns to prison.

Findings from the Learning Site will be used to inform the statewide evaluation strategy for measuring the impact of MPRI on these three key dimensions. Under Governor Jennifer M. Granholm's leadership, the statewide evaluation of the MPRI will be funded and will begin in FY2011. By the end of a new Governor's first term (2014), the statewide evaluation will have produced 5-years of data. In order to have results during this timeframe, MDOC funding that has been established for a full statewide evaluation beginning in FY 2009 will be reinvested for this learning-site approach. This, coupled with an investment from other funding partners, will support the MPRI Model implementation and evaluation in one Learning Site.

1. Evaluation System Change One MPRI Community Site at a Time

The first learning site that will be evaluated against the model is the Kent County MPRI Community Site. Approximately 3,000 male prisoners who are currently incarcerated in the Michigan prison system are expected to return to Kent County upon release. Sixty percent, or 1,796 prisoners, are either past their Earliest Release Date, or will be at their Earliest Release Date in the next two years. In addition, over the course of the next year, approximately 500 new prison admissions from Kent County for terms of two years or less will be received at the reception center and another 59 parolees are projected to be returned to prison. Thus, the Kent County site has a sufficient number of prisoners who can transition through all three phases of the process and be evaluated against criminal justice outcomes in the next two years.

The Learning Site evaluation will benefit from a focus on prisoners with short terms because the largest proportion of offenders who are admitted to prison each year have terms of two years or less. Using this population also allows the third party evaluator to produce both process and outcome data during the two-year window when this data can have the most benefit in attracting the support of a new governor's administration and new legislative leaders who will take office in 2011 (in addition to the Governor's election, both the Michigan House and the Senate will be elected in November, 2010).

By the time Governor Jennifer M. Granholm leaves office in January of 2011 there will be robust, independent evidence of the effect of MPRI on crime as well as substantial progress on the statewide evaluation which will be planned and begin implementation during her tenure. This will further enhance the already strong likelihood that there will not be a delay or major change in the continuation of the MPRI as a new Governor – and a new administration – takes over the reins of state government. As the evaluation continues over time, prisoners who are serving longer terms will also be evaluated against the Model which will provide further independent evidence of MPRI's effect on crime reduction.

MDOC will expand the learning site evaluation strategy to other sites during the next few years as part of our comprehensive statewide evaluation plan. The Learning Site strategy is designed to compliment and help drive on-going and continual efforts to take the MPRI fully up to scale. The four core components of the revised statewide evaluation plan, starting with the Learning Sites, are proposed to include:

- A. **Measures of offender behavior.** The indicators of offender criminal behavior include arrest, conviction, and disposition and will be analyzed. Other intermediate measures of offender behavior will be analyzed such as employment retention, wage earnings, residential stability, family support, and participation in treatment. Much can be learned from the Learning Site on how to measure and analyze this data. These lessons learned will be incorporated into the statewide evaluation plan.
- B. **Ten-Year Trend Analysis, Year-by-Year, Quarter-by-Quarter.** A ten-year trend analysis of site-specific data, available in real time, will be used to allow for localized interpretation of the offender behavior data and to understand the impact singular events can have on crime trends in specific communities. Data will also be retrospectively collected on outcomes and characteristics of offenders that have returned each community since 1998 in order to establish a ten-year trend history.

Additional data will be collected on events that affect the criminal justice system such as high profile criminal events, major corporate layoffs, changes in disposition and return to prison rates. These data will be plotted over time and provide a contextual framework to better understand shifts in criminal justice trends.

- C. **Comprehensive evaluation of impact.** New data will be collected on characteristics of offenders returning to communities that include additional information on offender demographics, criminal risk, criminal history, degree of MPRI Model exposure, and program and treatment dosages. Measures of impact, such as return to prison rates and time to parole failure, will be tracked and measured by MDOC and will augment the independent evaluation as ancillary but critical information.

An important component of this plan is that MDOC's data collection system needs to be enhanced to allow for the effective tracking of these variables. Piloting the enhanced data collection system in the Learning Site will ensure that the system is ready to be launched statewide to improve the tracking of these key variables.

- D. **Measures of Fidelity.** Finally, the MDOC will pilot a Total Quality Management (TQM) system at the Learning Site to measure and improve fidelity to the MPRI Model. Key measures of fidelity include assessing staff's offender engagement skills and evaluating supervisor's use of the "coaching, counseling, and discipline" strategy for staff development.

IX. Corrections' Spending Has Been Reduced Through Efficiencies And Cost Cutting

In the past six years, Corrections' spending in Michigan has been reduced by nearly \$400 million dollars by cutting the bureaucracy, re-configuring prison space, and implementing the MPRI.²² Michigan's efforts at "right sizing" the prison system is the most dramatic shift in resources from prisons to the community in the country. Reductions in the prison population will have resulted in the closing of 12 prison facilities between 2003 and 2009.

\$188 million in additional savings is expected for FY10 as efforts continue to focus on reducing the prison population. \$68 million will be reinvested for community supervision and grants to communities for offender treatment and programming.

Successful efforts under the Michigan Community Corrections Act (CCA) to reduce the number of admissions to prison and improve the use of local jail facilities will continue with an increased focus on using evidence based practices for effective offender assessment and accountability. Amendments to the CCA - and \$1 million in additional funding - is expected for Fiscal Year 2010.

Due to the success of MPRI, the prison population is declining and as prisons empty, they will be closed. With the bipartisan support of the Michigan Legislature, MPRI stakeholders have worked for the past six years to be prepared to take MPRI up to scale in FY 2010. Under MPRI, successful efforts will continue to reduce the number of prisoners past their Earliest Release Date (ERD) with greater success and fewer returns. \$20 million in additional FY 2009 funding – on top of the \$33 million already budgeted - has been recommended by the Governor to the Legislature to enhance the expansion of the MPRI and community supervision.

The department will also review its approach to security classification and the use of prison beds throughout the system that will result in the ability to use the most efficient housing methods possible.

As the current fiscal year progresses, we will determine which prison facilities can be closed. By June 2009, we will know which combinations of facilities can be closed based on the use of the facility, the location of the facility so that layoffs can be minimized and so that the impact of the community will be as minimal as possible. The department expects layoffs – exactly how many and where will be unknown for many months.

As the Parole Board identifies additional prisoners who are prepared for release, additional Parole Agents will be required to effectively supervise and manage them in the community. In order to parole additional prisoners as part of a concerted effort to reduce the number of prison beds in use by 3,500, resources will be available to effectively supervise them to reduce the likelihood that they will return to prison.

As prisoners are better prepared for parole consideration, parole rates are likely to increase. To be prepared for the increasing numbers of parolees, MPRI services need to be expanded to enhance the likelihood that returning prisoners will succeed in the community. \$22.5 million will be added to the budget to expand MPRI funding to communities for prison in-reach, housing, transportation, substance abuse, employment, and mental health services.

The MDOC recognizes there are special needs and challenges in the effective management of special need prisoners in the community. For example, for sex offenders, specialized resources are necessary to ensure safe and affordable housing in order to respect any statutory restrictions regarding residence. Specialized Parole Agents will work closely with community partners to ensure safe and stable housing is a component in the effective management of these offenders.

This funding will augment monies expected to be available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to be effectively used for former prisoners and probationers who need extensive job support in order to sustain their employment. MPRI funding to local communities will be expanded to accommodate these efforts.

The Council of State Government's Justice Reinvestment Workgroup Recommendations will Further Reduce Spending Beginning in Fiscal Year 2011.

Governor Jennifer Granholm, House Speaker Andy Dillon and Majority Leader Mike Bishop formed in 2008 a bi-partisan work group under the auspices of the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Reinvestment Initiative that has broken the political logjam that has consistently stymied many prior justice policy reform proposals. The CSG work group recommendations are the best consensus-based policies that could be developed and the recommendations are positive next step that complements the Administration's on-going efforts to control prison costs and institute justice policy reforms.

The "package approach" that the CSG work group has developed strikes a good balance between safely reducing the prison population and reducing future crime through enhanced education and job training efforts. It is expected that the Legislature will fast-track the CSG work group proposals to ensure that maximum savings will begin in Fiscal Year 2011. Over time, these efforts must be reinforced with additional justice policy reforms that further reduce the prison population.

There recommendations would not have been feasible without the statewide capability of the MPRI to respond to the call for even more aggressive action to reduce the Michigan Prison population.

CSG Work Group Recommendations that Affect Prison Admissions

Probationers with high risk and need factors have high rearrest rates and need intensive supervision, health services, education and other supports. The Justice Reinvestment Work Group has recommended that the Legislature and the Administration:

- Amend the Community Corrections Act (CCA) to eliminate the restriction to only allow targeting of non-assaultive offenders and to require the use of validated risk and need assessment.
- Target High Risk probationers under the CCA and measure impact of evidence based practices on reducing rearrest and demonstrate the quality of programs funded under the CCA.
- Expand graduated sanctions and services for probationers including the use of short jail stays as sanctions and, in the service area, improved approaches for employment.

CSG Work Group Recommendations that Affect Length of Stay

The Michigan Parole Board has broad discretion in keeping prisoners past the date that judges' sentences dictate. Currently, Michigan prisoners are serving, on average, over 144% of the minimum term given by the judiciary, when considering their entire time spent in prison including returns²³. In 2007, first time prison releases to parole served an average 127% of their court-

imposed minimum sentence. The Justice Reinvestment Work Group has recommended that:

- Legislation to require that the Parole Board release prisoners after serving between 100-120% of their court-imposed minimum sentence – with limited exceptions.
- Legislation to require that the Parole Board revoke parole for no more than 9 months for first time revocations related to condition violations.
- Legislation to require that the Parole Board, with only few exceptions, provide at least 9 months of parole supervision for prisoners who otherwise would have served their entire maximum sentence (no “max outs”, with few exceptions).

In closing, when taken together with front end alternatives to keep admissions low, re-entry can reduce prison populations and prisons can be closed. Only closing prisons can generate significant cost savings for reinvestments and reinvestments are critical to effective crime reduction efforts. The Second Chance Act is good federal policy and more funding is needed. Compare national funding ranges with Michigan - which will fund MPRI in FY 2010 at \$57M - and recognize that Michigan is under funded even at that level if it is to fully reach the 60% of moderate to high risk prisoners who are returning.

Between FY 2003 and FY 2015, over \$900M in cost savings, efficiencies and cost avoidance will result from the Granholm Administration’s focus on improving justice policies. Prison population projections will move from a projected need for 58,000 beds by 2007 (projected in 2003) to a projected need of about 43,000 beds in 2015 (2009 projections) for a 26% reduction in needed beds. Michigan’s 51 prisons in 2003 will be reduced to as few as 28 by 2015.

Some observers have indicated that this may be the single largest decarceration initiative in the history of criminal justice in the United States. This massive, decade long focus on improved policies to reduce the prison population began by focusing on evidence based practices for improving prisoner reentry.

Thank You.

ENDNOTES

¹ Don Stemen, “Reconsidering Incarceration: New Directions for Reducing Crime,” *Vera Institute of Justice*, New York, January 2007.

² “Michigan Crime and Incarceration,” *Citizens Research Council*, Michigan, November 2008.

³ Council of State Governments Justice Reinvestment Initiative in Michigan, Work group presentation (unpublished)

⁴ “Michigan Department of Corrections Costs; *Citizens Research Council*, Michigan, November 2008.

⁵ “Growth in Michigan’s Corrections System: Historical and Comparative Perspectives,” *Citizens Research Council*, Michigan, June 2008.

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⁸ Ibid, endnote No. 1

⁹ For example, see: Washington State Institute for Public Policy; *Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Future Prison Construction, Criminal Justice Costs, and Crime Rates*, October 2006; and Richard P. Seiter and Karen R. Kadela, “What Works, What Does Not, and What Is Promising,” *Crime and Delinquency*, July 2003.

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¹¹ Jared Bernstein and Ellen Houston, *Crime and Work: What We Can Learn from the Low Wage Labor Market* (Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2000); Bruce Western and Petit, “Incarceration and Racial Inequality in Men’s Employment,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 54, no. 3 (2000): 3-16.

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²¹ *Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community*. Council of State Governments. Reentry Policy Council. New York: Council of State Governments. January 2005.

²² MDOC Cost Reduction History, *Total Reductions in DOC Budget Since Appropriation Year 2002, 2008*.

²³ Michigan Department of Corrections, Parole Impact History.