

Corrections Briefings

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Changes and Challenges in Oregon Corrections

Over the past few months, the Department of Corrections has experienced many changes and challenges.

Changes

Changes include the retirement of Director Dave Cook and its domino effect on the organization. Those changes include the reassignment of some DOC managers into new positions. In July, Nick Armenakis became deputy director and Mitch Morrow moved to central office as assistant director of the Institutions Division. Rob Killgore succeeds Mitch as administrator of Oregon Corrections Enterprises. Other major changes include: Jean Hill to Snake River Correctional Institution as superintendent; Tony Santos to Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution as superintendent; Stan Czerniak to Central Office as administrator of the Institutions Division; Steve Ickes to the Intake Center at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility as administrator; Rebecca Prinslow to central office as administrator of the Inspections Division, and Brian Belleque to interim superintendent at Oregon State Penitentiary.

Additionally, Interim Director Ben de Haan recently announced that he has accepted a position at Portland State University as director of the Criminal Justice Policy Research Institute of the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government.

The department will continue to communicate additional changes with you via e-mail and Corrections Briefings.

Challenges

Number One on the "challenges" list is, of course, the budget.

During the Fifth Special Session, the Legislature passed HB 5100 which authorized \$21 million additional reductions to the department's budget. These cuts are over and above \$81 million in reductions already taken this biennium. HB 5100 also reduces community corrections grants by approximately \$7 million.

To further reduce the budget as specified in HB 5100, the department must close prisons and lay off employees. The situation is aggravated by the short time frame available to make the cuts and the fact that the department can't close prisons without the Legislature and/or voters granting it the authority to release inmates.

With the potential of closing prisons looming, each superintendent is in the process of examining the ramifications to their staff and their institutions. The department's Human Resources staff is making a concerted effort to sort out personnel issues that might affect staffing levels including meeting with all three labor organizations to discuss the lay-off articles, potential implementation and impact on employees.

In the meantime, the sale of bonds ("Certificates of Participation") for new prison construction scheduled for October was suspended. This affects the prison construction schedule for Warner Creek Correctional Facility in Lakeview, the new prison in Madras and the expansion of Shutter Creek Correctional Institution in North Bend.

OREGON DEPARTMENT
OF CORRECTIONS

The mission of the Oregon Department of Corrections is to promote public safety by holding offenders accountable for their actions and reducing the risk of future criminal behavior.

JOHN A. KITZHABER, M.D.
GOVERNOR



The first effects of the delays themselves will be felt in April 2004 when Warner Creek Correctional Facility was scheduled to open.

“As you can see, the state’s financial situation has far-reaching effects on our organization,” said Interim Director Ben de Haan. “The challenges (known and unknown) seem to change daily.

“While the department continues contingency planning around the budget situation, its important to note our efforts over the last few years to adopt the best correctional practices and research available.” explains Mr. de Haan. “We’ve pulled those efforts together under the umbrella of the Oregon Accountability Model. As we prepare for the worst case, we are still doing our best to move forward with the model, especially those pieces that can be accomplished without additional funding.”

Oregon Accountability Model Reprise

Since the Oregon Accountability Model increasingly shapes the way the DOC conducts its business, Corrections Briefings will feature a description of each component in this and subsequent issues.

First, a recap of the model as a whole:

The Oregon Accountability Model encompasses the simultaneous, coordinated and efficient implementation of many initiatives, programs and projects that create a foundation for inmates to lead successful lives upon release.

The model has six components; each stands on its own as a project or is a part of the department’s organization and culture. When woven together, these six separate components form a stronger fiber that enhances the department’s ability to hold inmates/offenders accountable for their actions and DOC staff accountable for achieving the mission and vision of the department.

Components of the Oregon Accountability Model:

- Criminal Risk Factor Assessment and Case Planning
- Staff-Inmate Interactions
- Work and Programs
- Children and Families
- Reentry
- Community Supervision and Programs

The ultimate goal of the Oregon Accountability Model is to improve public safety. The model ties together many concurrent and interrelated efforts of the department and its partners into a cohesive strategy to reduce recidivism and influence inmates into becoming productive citizens.

Feature Story:

The Reentry Component of the Oregon Accountability Model

One component of the Oregon Accountability Model evolved from a statewide project that focuses on transition – a seamless movement of offenders from court to incarceration to community supervision. Now under the umbrella of the Oregon Accountability Model, the component limits duplication of services and increases effective and efficient use of partnerships.

Reentry Facilities

Inmates are transferred to one of seven reentry facilities six months before their release. The time spent at a reentry facility is geared towards preparing inmates for release. Connections with the community before release are important factors in offenders’ successes on the outside, and may include work, treatment, religion, and housing.

Criminal Risk Factors Identified and Mitigated

At intake, every person will be evaluated in relation to seven criminal risk factors. The department provides targeted programs and services to mitigate these risk factors during incarceration and the counties follow through during community supervision. Needs and progress are tracked through each person’s Corrections Plan.



Family Orientation

The Department of Corrections has partnered with county community corrections agencies, the Board of Parole and Post-Prison and Oregon CURE (“Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants”) to develop and deliver an orientation for family members of inmates who will soon be released to Multnomah County (which receives approximately one-third of all releases). Family members learn what to expect, how to work with community corrections to support positive change, and where to go for support and resources.

Information Network For Oregon (INFO)

INFO provides listings and information about a variety of resources and services available in each city and county in Oregon. This resource manual, originally designed for inmates to use during their own release planning, has grown into a comprehensive directory used by a variety of other agencies as well as individuals. Inmates at Powder River Correctional Facility in Baker City produce this directory and update it frequently.

Oregon Trail/Offender Debit Card

People leaving Oregon prisons now receive Offender Debit Cards instead of checks for any monies in their accounts. The cards can be used at most automatic teller machines for cash or for purchases at point-of-sale machines in stores. In addition, because the backbone of Offender Debit Cards is the Department of Human Services’ Oregon Trail Card, inmates eligible for public assistance can access those benefits from the card issued by the DOC.

Smart Start

The department partnered with the Department of Human Services to deliver sexual health and family planning information to inmates during their last few months before release. Additionally, when inmates leave a DOC facility they receive over-the-counter family planning and personal hygiene items known as “Smart Start” packets.

Watch future issues of Corrections Briefings or the Department of Corrections Web site for detailed descriptions of the other components of the Oregon Accountability Model.

Oregon Receives \$2 Million Grant

Oregon’s Going Home Initiative, led by the Oregon Department of Corrections, has been awarded \$2 million from the U.S. Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs. The grants are part of the federal Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative.

Of all people lawfully released from prison each year, gang members have some of the highest potential for violence. The Oregon Department of Corrections is leading a statewide team to better prepare this serious and violent population for their eventual return to society through enhanced programs from the moment of intake through release from post-prison supervision.

Members of gangs, or “security threat groups” (STGs) in corrections lingo, are violent, difficult to treat, and likely to reoffend. The grant will be used to create a seamless delivery of services and supervision from prison to home for this high-risk group of people. Programs will be offered at four reentry facilities: two male minimum security prisons, one male multi-custody prison, and one juvenile facility. Offenders being released to Marion and Multnomah counties will be eligible to participate; approximately 600 STG inmates will be released in Oregon in the next three years, half of them to these two counties.

The planning/advisory committee that developed the proposal consists of members from public safety agencies, community corrections, juvenile corrections, adult corrections and others. The DOC Research and Evaluation Unit will evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the Going Home Initiative.



Briefs

- In mid-July, the department received a “classification exception” to the state hiring freeze begun in June for correctional officers, corporals, sergeants, lieutenants and captains. The emergency response nature of these positions and the imminent effect they have on the health, welfare, and safety of the public were cited in the exception.
- Leadership Oregon Institute, a group from Oregon’s agricultural community, will spend three days in November visiting several facilities and learning about the Oregon Accountability Model and county and state corrections issues.
- The DOC supported firefighting efforts around the state this summer and fall. As many as 300 minimum-custody inmates and more than 60 staff from five facilities responded to 31 separate fires to assist with fire fighting, camp support, and kitchen operations. Inmates and staff in two prisons made 38,600 lunches for firefighters which were delivered by DOC staff to five different locations statewide.
- DOC Health Services will begin to manufacture eyeglasses for inmates. The program will start-up at Columbia River Correctional Institution and is expected to reduce costs as well as the waiting time for new glasses from weeks to days.
- Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville earned PGE’s Earth Advantage certification. It is the first state facility and the first prison in Oregon to qualify. The facility met the Earth Advantage Program’s strict criteria for environmental and energy conservation through construction that combined opportunities for energy efficiency, recycling, environmental enrichment, and resource conservation. For example, the facility uses 40 percent less energy than Oregon code requires.

Fast Fact:

Want more information?
Check out the
DOC’s Web site:
<http://www.doc.state.or.us>

- The 57th Correctional Education Association Conference held in Portland in mid-August featured DOC leaders and staff showcasing our department’s programs. More than 700 correctional education representatives from around the world learned about the Oregon Accountability Model and the department’s parent education programs.

OCJA Recognizes Two DOC Staff

The Oregon Criminal Justice Association recognized the work of two DOC staff at their annual conference in October:

Dr. Rex Newton received the 2002 George Tooley Adult Criminal Justice Employee of the Year award. Dr. Newton was cited for being a key player in the department’s Children of Incarcerated Parents Project. Along with the Oregon Social Learning Center, he helped develop a parenting curriculum specifically targeted to the special needs of incarcerated parents, their children, and the children’s caregivers. Several prisons now offer parenting education classes and therapeutic visiting.

TRCI Captain Sonny Rider received the OCJA Adult Corrections Leadership Award. Sonny was honored for his unfailingly positive attitude and enthusiasm, strong teamwork, and for serving as an excellent role model and mentor to fellow employees. He is credited with living the adage: “Every problem is an opportunity for creativity.”

Dialysis Services Now Provided within Prison

When kidneys fail, a person must undergo expensive dialysis to remove wastes and toxins from the blood. The Oregon Department of Corrections has a number of male inmates who require this treatment. Instead of transporting them to community medical centers, DOC Health Services began on-site dialysis at Two Rivers Correctional Institution (TRCI) last March. The \$23,000 start-up costs translated to significant savings: nearly \$3,500 less per patient each month in dialysis costs and approximately \$5,000 a month in transportation savings for each of the nine inmates.



There are other benefits as well. For instance, on-site treatment improves continuity of care because a nephrologist (kidney specialist) consults with TRCI medical staff each month. Safety and security for the public are improved as well: The need is eliminated for dozens of medical trips outside the prisons each week.

Each inmate has three dialysis sessions a week performed by contracted medical personnel. To minimize disruption in the inmates' corrections plans, dialysis is scheduled around their programs and work assignments whenever possible.

Intensive Management System Makes Prisons Safer

The Department of Corrections began using intensive management in 1991; since then it has evolved into a national model for managing high risk inmates.

Intensive management is practiced at Oregon State Penitentiary, Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and Snake River Correctional Institution. There is also a new step-down unit at Two Rivers Correctional Institution to phase people gradually back into the general inmate population from an intensive management unit (IMU).

With the advent of the Oregon Accountability Model, intensive management has become more than a tool to manage disruptive, dangerous inmates. It is now a system that begins with evaluations and carefully works with inmates to help them change their behavior so they can ultimately return safely to the general prison population.

Once an inmate is classified as maximum custody, his/her behavioral assets and deficits are assessed. That information is translated into a comprehensive Behavior Action Plan (BAP). The BAP is an individualized program plan that outlines the behaviors that are to be targeted with programs. In keeping with the Oregon Accountability Model, appropriate behaviors are encouraged through oral reinforcement and privileges.

The number of programs to mitigate behavior problems have more than tripled in the last ten year. Programs now provide a wide range of alternative approaches to help inmates gain insight into their behavior. Most focus on teaching inmates to learn to control their anger and negative impulses as well as to make better choices. Programs range from 6 months to three years or more, and are offered in a sequence similar to a college schedule.

Inmates who continue maladaptive behavior or fail their programs are re-assessed to reflect the corresponding change in behavior. Upon successful completion of the BAP and after a staff review, the inmate may be recommended for transfer to the close custody unit and, subsequently, a non-IMU housing assignment.

Intensive management now also includes criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and databases to track the progress of each inmate.

Through careful coordination, information sharing, common goals and targeted programs, intensive management will continue to make Oregon's prisons safer for inmates and staff.

Corrections Briefings

Oregon Department of Corrections
2575 Center Street, Salem, OR 97301-4667
(503) 945-0925
<http://www.doc.state.or.us>

