

Connecticut Sentencing Task Force
Community Supervision and Alternative Sanctions Subcommittee
September 10, 2007
Meeting Summary

Attendees: Loel Meckel (DMHAS), Jerry Stowell (BOPP), Randy Braren (BOPP), Thomas White (CSSD), Jennifer Robinson (Jud), KK Meyer (Public Defender), Brian Coco (CSSD), Tom Hogan (CSSD), Bill Carbone (CSSD), Brian Hill (CSSD), Steve Grant (CSSD), Barb Tombs (VERA), Andrew Clark (CCSU)

Meeting Commenced: 10:12 am

Welcome: Chairman Farr

Member Introductions

Summary of August 20th meeting- Andrew Clark (CCSU)

Available on CTN Website

Written Summary available at: www.ct.gov/opm/CriminalJustice/SentencingTaskForce

Update on Electronic Monitoring for Individuals Convicted of Burglary- Randy Braren, Board of Pardons and Paroles

- All burglary 1 and 2's electronically monitored
- Total # approximately 140
- Reports are reviewed daily, passive GPS as opposed to active
- Farr greater level of interaction between parole officers and offenders, meet more regularly
- A few individuals have violated
- Increased level of compliance- offenders more accountable of their whereabouts
- Greater level of offender awareness
- CSSD is currently using electronic monitoring for sex offenders
- No research planned to evaluate the success of electronic monitoring.

CSSD Recommendations- Brian Coco, Thomas Hogan and Brian Hill

- CSSD in the process of gathering historical research regarding what works well with offenders
- Handout provided
- In the process of completing a draft proposal
 - The research available provides clear guidance on what seems to work with offenders
 - There is not any clear cut research
 - Must understand that all offenders are different
 - The PSI (Pre Sentence Investigation) is an important document for the court to determine an appropriate sentence and probation to make decisions on how to best handle a particular case.

- Allows probation officers to better assess the needs of offenders
- The information being derived from these assessments will be available to the court

CSSD Recommendations-

1) Require that all first time offenders complete a PSI- Brian Hill

- 2005 data collected, 1st time felons, 15% of first time felons sentenced to probation that year were given a PSI. PSI takes an average of 11 hrs to complete
- In order for CSSD to conduct a PSI on all felons, 41 probation officers will be needed to specifically conduct PSI's
- By statute, all first time felons should be given a PSI within six weeks after being ordered.
- A PSI can be waived for first conviction, and does not have to be given for any further convictions. Felons may pass through multiple times without ever having a PSI
- The PSI looks at family status, employment, education, substance abuse history, treatment records, mental health history and victim input
- Allows the court to make appropriate recommendations such as treatment, protective orders, community services etc.
- CSSD has access to juvenile records including DCF records and psychiatric records as long as the individual agrees to disclose such information.
- PSI ordered by the court after conviction, prior to sentencing
- A court can in fact order a PSI for a non-felony conviction
- CSSD has the capacity to make a referral for a psychiatric evaluation
- The majority of states use the PSI, it just depends on how the state chooses to use their resources (Barb Tombs)

2) CSSD Mental Health Proposal- Brian Coco

- A pre-trial programming will allow offenders to receive the appropriate treatment right away
- Probation Officers become part of the treatment process
- Mental health records are protected
- CSSD will collaborate with DHMAS
- Maintain recovery by getting the client treatment quicker
- Parole has special mental health units, can share information with CSSD
- Kansas has drug treatment programs similar to this proposal, partnering supervision with a type of treatment. Offender's needs are being met and public safety is addressed.

3) Change average probation period from 5 years to 3 years

- Excludes sex offenders
- Focus supervision period on what research suggests is most effective

- The more we can do to get the client invested in the beginning may reduce recidivism
- Creates an incentive for good behavior
- After a two-year span the probation officer would send a progress report to the court to determine further supervision.
- Linking good conduct with end of supervision
- Trying to create positive incentives, research suggests that positive reinforcement is more effective than punishment
- Review of probation in other states

Next Meeting: October 2nd at 10:00 am

Meeting Adjourned: 12:16 pm