

Implementation Progress Report, August 15, 2014 for 2013 LBA Performance Audit of Transitional Housing and Work Release Program

In accordance with Executive Order 2014-03 issued by Governor Hassan requiring a report on progress implementing the recommendations of performance and financial audits of any audit issued since January 2013, I am submitting this report to comply with this Order to report on a performance audit on the Department of Corrections Transitional Housing and the Inmate Work Release Program that was conducted by the Office of the Legislative Budget Assistant that was submitted to the Fiscal Committee of the General Court in November 2013. The following information lists the observations, the recommendations, the auditee responses, and the implementation progress:

Observation No. 1 Establish Clear Goals and Objectives for Transitional Housing

Recommendations:

- clearly define the goals for transitional housing;
- utilize other measures, in addition to the inmate classification system, to identify inmates who would most benefit from transitional housing and the Work Release Program;
- reconsider the practice of moving all C-2 inmates onto the wait list for transitional housing;
- closely monitor the length of time inmates remain in the Work Release Program to help ensure its availability for inmates who could most benefit from it; and
- determine if using the THUs for different populations is consistent with DOC goals.

Auditee Response:

We concur with this recommendation.

Implementation progress:

- The Division of Community Corrections is currently in the process of re-evaluating and re-defining the goals of transitional housing. We anticipate completion of this recommendation by Fall 2014.
- The Division of Community Corrections has determined that the key to utilizing other measures to identify inmates who would benefit from transitional housing and the Work Release Program in addition to the classification system is a complete revamping of the case management system. This system will offer a preliminary reentry plan within the first 90 to 100 days of incarceration. With this plan, decisions regarding transitional housing and the ability to benefit from work release will be considered and adjusted throughout one's incarceration rather than solely

based on the inmate's general classification. The newly reorganized case management system is due to become effective on September 1, 2014.

- The practice of moving all C-2 inmates onto a wait list for transitional housing based solely on classification is also being re-considered. This recommendation is also tied to the re-organized case management system. This system will be able to identify and prioritize inmates who have a more compelling need to transition through transitional housing and work release.
- Currently by policy, the Department does not allow an inmate to be moved to transitional housing until they have 12 months or less until their minimum parole date. This policy limits stays in transitional housing to 12 months or less. As we further define our goals for transitional housing, we will be reviewing this timeline to consider modifying it to a shorter period of time.

Observation No. 2 Measure the Effectiveness of the Work Release Program

Recommendations:

- Developing research-based output, efficiency, and outcome measures related to program goals; and
- Collecting data and reporting on the program.

Auditee Response:

We concur with the recommendation to develop output, efficiency, and outcome measures, collect data and report on the program and use the information to determine if the program is having a positive effect on the inmates. The costs associated with this recommendation will be determined and will be presented in the next budget proposal.

Implementation Progress:

- Output and efficiency outcome measures are being considered in the process of re-developing the goals of transitional housing and the Work Release Program. Any costs associated with this recommendation will be determined and presented in the next budget proposal.
- Collecting data and reporting on the program are being considered in the process of re-developing the goals of transitional housing and the Work Release Program. Any costs associated with this recommendation will be determined and presented in the next budget proposal.

Observation No. 3 Strengthen Operations Policies and Procedures

Recommendations:

- Ensuring they provide adequate management directives concerning the use of transitional housing for different resident populations;
- Formalizing CC/CM duties, functions, and job descriptions as needed; and
- Updating the Division's transitional housing *Handbook of Rules and Regulations*.

Auditee Response:

We concur with this recommendation.

Implementation Progress:

- This recommendation is included in the process of re-evaluating and re-defining the goals of transitional housing and the Work Release Program. We anticipate completion of this recommendation by Fall 2014.
- This recommendation is included in the re-organization of the case management system. The new system is scheduled to become effective on September 1, 2014.
- Updating the Division's Transitional Housing *Handbook of Rules and Regulations* will become a higher priority once the many changes scheduled for this Division are completed. The anticipated time for reviewing this *Handbook* is Spring 2015.

Observation No. 4 Develop Health Care Policies for Transitional Housing Unit Inmates and Parolee Residents

Recommendations:

- We recommend the DOC clarify Department health care policies for inmates, parolees, and parole violators assigned to transitional housing.

Auditee Response:

We concur with this recommendation.

Implementation Progress:

- This recommendation is included in the process of re-evaluating and re-defining the goals of transitional housing and the Work Release Program. We anticipate completion of this recommendation by Fall 2014.

Observation No. 5 Follow Best Practices for Sexual Offender Treatment

Recommendations:

- Consider providing sexual offender maintenance treatment to inmates in its transitional housing facilities consistent with best practices;
- Update its policies to identify how Shea Farm, TWC, North End, and Calumet residents should receive needed sexual offender maintenance treatment; and
- Provide a comparable level of sexual offender maintenance treatment to both males and females at these facilities.

Auditee Response:

We concur with the recommendation. However, sex offender maintenance treatment decisions are made on an individual clinical basis. This will require additional resources to successfully manage. The costs associated with this recommendation will be determined and will be presented in the next budget proposal.

Implementation Progress:

- This recommendation will require additional staffing and resources. The costs associated have not been determined at this time. Because of the increased budget due to additional staffing and resources necessary for the new Women's Prison project, this costs associated with this recommendation will be considered for the 2018 – 2019 budget proposal.
- Same as above.
- Same as above.

Observation No. 6 Continue Implementing Evidence-Based Practices

Recommendations:

- Identifying the evidence-based practices the DCC should be actively researching and planning to implement immediately and over a longer term;
- Instituting measurements to assess program performance;
- Providing interventions to inmates nearing their release into the community and ensuring a continuum of care is maintained;

- Establishing a system to deliver targeted interventions to inmates and consider separating low risk offenders from medium and high risk offenders; and
- Creating a mechanism to monitor staff delivery of programmatic services or interventions to inmates.

Auditee Response:

We concur with this recommendation.

Implementation Progress:

- All of the recommendations listed above are included in the process of re-evaluating and re-designing the goals of transitional housing and the Work Release Program, and with the re-organization of the case management system. Reporting on associated objectives to these recommendations to date, all case management staff have been trained and certified in three evidence-based programs, EPICS, Thinking for a Change, and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use. Several staff members have also been certified as trainers in these programs so that we can internally train future case managers and counseling staff. Supervisors will also be monitoring the fidelity of these evidence-based programs in the near future.



William L. Wrenn
Commissioner
NH Department of Corrections

August 15, 2015

Date