

## 2008 Crime Bills

### Judicial – CSSD Update

1. **Electronic sharing of critical criminal justice information with other state and local agencies**
  - In April of 2008, the Judicial Electronic Bridge, known as JEB, was opened. It enabled electronic access to Pre-sentence Investigations, Warrant Affidavits, and Youthful Offender and Juvenile records by the Board of Pardon & Paroles (BPP) and the Department of Correction (DOC). This new system replaced the old inefficient manual system which often resulted in lengthy delays, loss of documents and other errors which affected the quality of decision making on offender classification and releases. Now, from their desks at DOC or the BPP, they have direct electronic access to all of this information.
  - In June of 2008, the Branch expanded JEB access to Federal, State and Municipal police as well as state's attorneys allowing them to view important Adult Probation information. Now, when police conduct investigations or make a field contact, they can check to see if a person is on probation, what the conditions of probation are, if the probationer is in violation status, and who to contact in Probation for further information. Since its inception, there have been over 89,000 inquiries by multiple law enforcement agencies on this expansion, known as the Municipal Judicial Electronic Bridge (MJEB).
  - In October of 2008, we expanded the Judicial Branch website to bring all Violation of Probation warrants to the attention of the public. Each day, there are at least 400 inquiries which often bring important information to adult probation that leads to the service of more warrants. Prior to this new electronic system, and prior to the sharing of VOP warrants with police which began in the fall of 2008, we had reached a high point in September 2007 of almost 8,000 unserved violation of probation warrants. Today, that number has been reduced to 5,061, a drop of 37%.
  
2. **Increased and more effective management of sex offenders in the community**

CSSD now supervises more than 2,550 registered sex offenders each day. This caseload has increased by as much as 10% annually. This is because, while the average probation period for non-sex offenders is approximately 2.4 years, for sex offenders, it is 8.1 years and rising. To more effectively supervise this group, the following improvements have been made under the crime bills

- Clinical evaluation and supervision classification for split sentence sex offenders are now completed before release from incarceration. Prior to the new resources granted under the crime bills, this more likely occurred post release, meaning that many offenders would be in the community for a period of time without the supervising officer having the benefit of a clinical study that informs on the level of supervision and treatment needed;
- 27 new adult probation officers were hired in 2009 so that caseload size can be reduced in order to achieve more frequent monitoring, especially for those sex offenders living in shelters and on electronic monitoring. Sex offender probation officers routinely have had 45 cases each, a very high caseload given the complexity and severity of the population. The new resources have brought average caseloads for our highest risk sex offenders to 30 cases per officer, closer to

the goal of a 25 to 1 ratio, as recommended by the American Probation and Parole Association.

- New tools have been made available to sex offender probation officers who manage these cases:
  - Software is now used to monitor offender computer activity in order to identify inappropriate computer use;
  - More cases are now monitored by GPS. With internal improvements, as well as collaboration with our current provider, and the establishment of the dedicated monitoring station to triage alerts prior to them being sent to an officer has resulted in significant time and resource savings;
  - Polygraph testing is now available to assist our officers and treatment providers in the verification of an offender's behavior and activities while in the community. All offenders have at least one test each year.

There is one area of sex offender management that clearly remains a problem. We continue to have many sex offenders living in shelters for lack of any alternative. For example, in Hartford and New Haven alone, there is an average of 60 homeless sex offenders living in shelters every day.

- Under the crime bills, funding was made available to create a "Day Monitoring and Treatment Program" in both Hartford and New Haven so that homeless sex offenders would be monitored more closely throughout the day. We were successful opening a program in New Haven in early 2009; due to siting problems, the Hartford program did not begin supervising clients until June 2010. The day program is important because it works with the sex offender to find suitable housing, employment and to insure their participation in treatment.
- The crime bill also called for a 12 bed sex offender residential facility. Initially, a joint bid was issued in late 2008, and a vendor selected in January 2009. Due to budget constraints we were unable to move forward in funding the program. Each agency issue RFP's in 2010; each agency received only one proposal, both from the same contractor. As a result, the Judicial Branch partnered with the Department of Correction, the contract was awarded in April 2010 and site has been selected. The vendor is in the process of ordering the modular units, but EPA testing and legal action by the town of Montville may delay the completion of the project.

### **3. More treatment options for substance abusing and mentally ill offenders**

Some examples:

- The Supervised Diversionary Program for accused persons with psychiatric disabilities. This program, which went into effect October 1, 2008, was intended to create an alternative to pre-trial incarceration for individuals with chronic mental health problems. The defendant can apply for this in the same way as the state's accelerated rehabilitation program. Applicants undergo a mental health evaluation, which is done in cooperation with DMHAS; if granted, they immediately begin treatment. Since inception, over 1,200 investigations were ordered, and so far, nearly 700 have been granted, with 193 pending. To date, we have had 196 discharges from the program, with a successful completion rate of 86 percent.

- The crime bills also added 135 treatment beds to CSSD. This was intended to address the significant waitlist problem stemming largely from the Jail Re-Interview program for pre-trial detainees, and those on probation, but doing poorly in out patient services, and therefore at risk of violation. That waitlist was lengthy in 2008 and it is today. As of March 2010, there are 404 individuals waiting for inpatient treatment, but beds are unavailable; 254 of this number are pretrial detainees, most of whom remain incarcerated while their case is pending. While the crime bill authorized 135 new treatment beds which would have served about 400 persons annually, due to various budget constraints, to date, we have been able to purchase 75 of the 135 beds called for in the bills.
- The combination of supervision and access to services seems to be having an effect on recidivism rates in the probation and alternative community program systems. For example, the 24-month rearrest rate for probationers hit a low of 43 percent in 2010, down from a high of 47 percent as recently as 2007. Similarly, 12-month rearrest rates for clients completing the Alternative in Community (AIC) program have been reduced from a high of 45 percent in 2007 to 36 percent in 2009.