



North Carolina Department of Correction
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS
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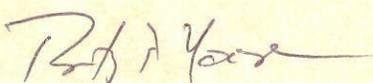
Beverly Eaves Perdue
Governor

Timothy D. Moose
Director

Alvin W. Keller, Jr.
Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Sarah Parker, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
Senior Resident Superior Court Judges
Clerks of Superior Court
Chief District Court Judges
Administrative Office of the Courts
District Attorneys

FROM: Timothy Moose 

DATE: April 22, 2010

RE: Division of Community Corrections Operational Changes

It is no secret that the past two years have been a challenge for the Division of Community Corrections. Changes needed to be made, and we are making them. I am writing to give you—our stakeholders who rely on a well-functioning community corrections system—an update on three aspects of the Division's progress thus far and our plans for the future. As always, our mission is to leverage the resources we are given as best we can to improve public safety, offender supervision outcomes, and caseload management for our staff.

First, guided by recommendations from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), the State Personnel Commission made fundamental changes to the way we classify our probation-parole officers. We streamlined our staff by consolidating three classes of supervising officer (Levels I, II, and III) into a single, higher-level classification. Since January we have trained over 200 officers at the new classification level, giving us over 1,450 supervising officers. In addition, we will continue to have over 200 surveillance officers assisting each unit with intermediate sanctions, fugitive apprehension, and other specialized functions.

At the same time, we created a new position known as a Judicial Service Coordinator (JSC), which includes the former Community Service Coordinator classification and some former Level I officer positions. Nearly 100 employees are currently being trained to handle offender intake, community service placement, web-based supervision applications, and data management for the agency. Ultimately, we will have over 200 JSCs.

Both officers and coordinators are essential to our mission. With a dedicated cadre of JSCs specializing in courtroom, administrative, and intake functions, field officers will be able to devote

more time to hands-on offender supervision. The transition has not been easy, but our staff has worked tirelessly to complete it in an exemplary manner. We expect to finish the transition in May.

Second, in addition to consolidating officers into a single position classification, we are also working to balance caseloads. In the past, the Division allowed some officers to carry a reduced caseload of offenders, such as domestic violence offenders, sex offenders, drug treatment court offenders, and others. Though well-intended, these specialized categories proved difficult to manage. Internally, they caused severely imbalanced caseloads that contributed to staff turnover. Externally, supervision quality suffered as offenders subject to multiple sanctions bounced back and forth between various specialized and non-specialized officers. In short, we have decided that multiple reduced caseload specialization is a luxury we cannot afford. With the exception of sex offenders, who will continue to be supervised at a lower offender-to-officer ratio as resources permit, officers will now carry a blended caseload. As a former specialized officer, I and our leadership team do recognize the value in having officers who are resident experts in certain areas, and we will continue to have specializations within the blended caseload strategies; balanced by revised supervision levels.

Third, as part of a nationwide movement, the Division is working to implement supervision strategies proven through empirical research to work—and to discontinue those that don't. This commitment to evidence-based practices has resulted in an overhaul of our offender assessment and leveling process. For example, in the near future we will begin supervising offenders based on the results of a data-driven risk-needs assessment, overlaid with the sanctions and requirements of the Court. The approach considers not only an offender's *risk* of re-arrest, but also his or her *needs* related to things such as dysfunctional family environment, criminal peers, antisocial behavior and values, and substance abuse. These factors are what the research tells us are most important to identify in order to determine which offenders need more attention, and which need to be removed from the community quickly in the event of non-compliant behavior.

We are working hard to plan for these changes and to communicate them with our staff. Change is hard, of course, but I believe that the culture of our organization is gradually changing to support an evidence-based approach, and I know that our officers and all of our staff are working hard each day and night to improve outcomes for public safety and offender supervision. Should you or any of your staff need additional information, we will be happy to provide it. We are proud of our partnership and collaborative efforts within our communities across the state with each of you, and we will continue to work with you in all aspects of our system to gain the improvements we all desire. Thank you for your continued support during this important time.

C: Division Leadership & Management Teams

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