

**Offender ReEntry Services:**  
Increasing Public Safety and Reducing Recidivism

**The Challenge of Reintegration to Society:**

MCCD has, since our beginnings in 1956, advocated for increased public safety through the availability and provision of necessary services and supervision for prisoners returning to their home communities. Prisons and parole supervision can and do play vital roles in preparing prisoners to succeed upon release. However, successful community reintegration has not always been the top priority of the corrections system, nor can prisons and parole supervision accomplish that goal by acting alone. When Governor Granholm took office in 2003, about 48% of Michigan parolees were returning to prison within 2 years of release from prison. The failure of the system was costing Michigan taxpayers \$117 million annually. Of even more concern to MCCD was the threat of repeated victimization and community destabilization.

In 2002, MCCD partnered with the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) and Public Policy Associates, Inc. (PPA) to bring the corrections system in Michigan into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by implementing evidence informed policies and programs. The partnership was aimed at facilitating greater collaboration between the corrections system and communities to improve public safety by increasing the success rates of returning prisoners.

**Philosophy in Action:**

The research is clear: In order to ensure successful reentry, planning aimed at reducing each individual's assessed criminogenic needs must begin at the time of entry into the prison/detention system. That plan, developed with the individual, should describe the programming, services and supervision that each individual will complete from the time of incarceration through community supervision and successful reintegration. To truly be successful, this philosophy of "*Exit upon Entry*" must be ingrained into the culture of the juvenile and adult justice and correctional systems.

With that research as the foundation, the partnership of MCCD, MDOC and PPA guided the development and implementation of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI), which was launched as a statewide initiative by Governor Granholm in 2003. The MPRI Model describes a 3-phase reentry process that focuses on facility programming, transition preparation, and aftercare support. Phase I begins with assessment of risk and need and includes delivery of appropriate programming and services within the institution to prepare for reentry. During Phase II, Transition Teams, composed of facility staff, parole staff and community supports, meet with individual prisoners close to their expected date of release to prepare a plan for successful transition to the community. Once in the community, at Phase III, parolees are linked into a system of community supervision, programming, services and support designed to establish and maintain a successful life in the community. This continuum of services and supervision helps ensure that the criminogenic needs of the prisoners are reduced within the correctional facility and, more importantly, within the community, ultimately resulting in safer neighborhoods.

**Success of MPRI:**

MPRI implementation has succeeded far beyond what was envisioned by the partners during the planning stage. In 2003, we determined that MPRI would be successful if return to prison rates were reduced by 6%. Between 2006, when MCCC helped establish the MPRI structure in the first 8 communities, and December of 2009 MPRI has shown a 26% relative rate reduction in total returns to prison. That reduction means 2,083 fewer people returned to prison than expected when compared to a baseline sample with similar characteristics. It also means that Michigan's communities experienced less crime than they would have without the MPRI. Ongoing evaluation and exploration of the MPRI process and outcomes will enable us to strengthen our services and increase our ability to promote public safety.

Sustaining the early success of the MPRI requires that the philosophy and behavior described in the model be embedded into the culture of the MDOC and the communities it serves. The entire way of doing the business of corrections, including policies, position descriptions, staff evaluation procedures, administration budgets, and training, must focus on providing prisoners with the tools needed to be successful in the community. The MDOC has made great strides, displaying a level of collaboration and commitment to change rarely seen in the past. However, critical work remains over the next several years to complete the transformation of the MDOC and ensure continued progress.

Furthermore, although we have seen incredible growth in local capacity followed by well publicized success during these first years of implementation, continued local capacity building is more critical now than ever before. As a result of their early success and the ever increasing number of individuals on parole, communities are under tremendous pressure to expand capacity even more, and they will need continued support from the state in order to keep pace with the demands.

Success of the initiative is far from guaranteed. Achieving success will require consistent monitoring from current and future MDOC leadership and stakeholders from across the state to assure the full implementation and continuation of the "*Exit Upon Entry*" philosophy.

**Expansion of MPRI:**

Despite the challenges to securing MPRI's future, we are committed to capitalizing on the success and momentum of the initiative. Therefore, this year MCCC was instrumental in the development of a reentry framework for juvenile justice known as the Michigan Youth ReEntry Initiative (MYRI). This initiative is expected to serve 85 youths from state operated facilities over the next 3 years. While based on MPRI, we will modify that model as necessary to fit Michigan's juvenile justice system. Realizing that the majority of juveniles securely confined are not in state facilities, MCCC is committed to taking the lessons learned from MYRI to local courts for implementation.

Youth who go through the juvenile justice system are at a greater risk for finding themselves in the prison system as adults. Reentry services will better enable Michigan to prevent youth from ever entering the adult correctional system. The successful expansion

to juvenile reentry services can lead to even higher amounts of long-term cost savings due to a decrease in crime associated costs.

**Future Direction:**

MCCD is committed to ensuring successful statewide implementation of evidence informed reentry services through collaboration with the Departments of Corrections and Human Services. We will continue to provide guidance and support as local MPRI Steering Teams leverage each region's unique strengths and resources. We will also engage courts, prosecutors, law enforcement, schools, and service providers to emphasize their vital role along the continuum of crime prevention and intervention.

I often ask myself, why are we waiting until someone goes to prison to provide the services necessary for success? Common sense (supported by the data) tells us that providing the necessary supports for people to lead crime free lives is the most effective strategy for ensuring public safety. Therefore, our most important goal will be to expand our focus on post-release treatment to include crime prevention by increasing the capacity of local communities to proactively address the risks and needs that often lead to criminal involvement. With your help, we will achieve our vision of Michigan as a safe and productive place to live, work and raise our families.