

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY-BASED
OFFENDERS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS**

A LEGISLATIVE FOOTNOTE REPORT FOR SENATE BILL 07-160



FEBRUARY 1, 2008

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Introduction

This report provides information on the psychotropic medication program that was funded in Senate Bill 07-160 in the fiscal year 2006-2007 supplemental budget process. Footnote 5d states

"The Department is requested to submit a report to the Joint Budget Committee on or before February 1, 2008, summarizing the outcomes of offenders who were provided Psychotropic medication from the line item. The report is requested to include the number of mentally ill offenders who receive medication from this line item, the regression rate of the offenders, and the number of offenders who commit new crimes. The report is requested to compare these outcomes with the population of mentally ill offenders in community corrections programs in FY 2005-06."

The Colorado Department of Corrections was appropriated \$552,000 in the Community Services, Community Supervision Subprogram, to fund psychotropic medications for offenders in this subprogram. The appropriation was based on the initial calculations for 368 inmates x \$10 per day x 150 days (February 2007 through June 2007) for a total of \$552,000 or \$110,400/month. Final spending authority for this appropriation was not received until April 2007, which resulted in a delay in actual implementation of the program and limited spending of the appropriated funds.

A purchase order was issued to Avia Partners Inc. in April 2007 for \$552,000. Avia has an extensive network of participating pharmacies throughout the state of Colorado and their selection enabled the implementation process to be expedited.

Process

Approximately 17% of the total adult incarcerated population has a serious mental illness. Upon transition from prison to community, these offenders receive a 30-day supply of appropriate psychotropic medications and become eligible for these funds once that supply is exhausted. In addition to the transitional population, offenders placed in the community return to custody centers may be eligible for psychotropic medication funding. The referral process is initiated by the Community Parole Officer (CPO) to the Community Re-Entry Program staff, the Department's administrator of the funds. Eligibility and verification of the documentation are completed and the offender receives a voucher that is honored by participating pharmacies.

Awareness and training of all CPO's and community corrections staff has been a high priority since the implementation in April 2007 to ensure all eligible offenders in need of psychotropic medication receive assistance from this program.

Analysis

A total of \$6,871.64 was spent on psychotropic medications between April 1 and June 30, 2007. 74 prescriptions were filled for a total of 28 offenders, 25 offenders in community

corrections transition programs and 3 offenders in community return to custody centers. The average price per prescription was \$92.86 and the number of issued prescriptions averaged 2.64 per offender over this 3-month period.

The status of offenders participating in the medication program was tracked through January 23, 2008, and compared to other mentally ill offenders in similar placements who did not participate in the medication program. Of the 25 community transition offenders participating in this program; 14 (56.1%) were still in community or ISP inmate transition programs as of this date, 5 (20.0%) have released to parole, 6 (24.0%) have been regressed to prison, and no offenders have returned to prison after paroling for either a technical violation or a new felony conviction. All 3 offenders participating in the medication program while in a community return to custody center were subsequently reparaoled. It is noted that all offenders in the community return to custody centers are in these placements for 180 days as the result of a technical parole violation. One offender remains on parole (33.0%), one offender returned to prison as the result of a technical parole violation (33.0%), and one offender returned to prison with a new felony conviction (33.0%).

The comparison group consisted of all mentally ill offenders in community corrections programs or community return to custody centers during the same time period, April 1 through June 30, 2007. A total of 2,508 offenders were participating in these two placement options during this time period; 2,069 in community corrections and 439 in community return to custody centers. 433 mentally ill offenders were identified (17.3% of the total), 320 in community corrections (15.5%) and 113 community return to custody centers (25.7%).

Table 1 below contains a comparison of the 28 offenders participating in the medication program to the 405 mentally ill offenders that did not participate. The small number of offenders participating in the medication program limits the conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis. A general comparison pool was used for this analysis, however this population most likely contains those offenders with less serious mental health needs. Further analysis would be needed to identify a subgroup within this population that would be more appropriate for comparison. Specific mental health treatment and medication needs, criminal background, and other factors would be significant components to control for when identifying this subgroup.

Table 1
Comparison of Psychotropic Medication Program Participants to Non-Participants
Offenders in Community Corrections and Community Return to Custody Programs
From April 1 through June 30, 2007
Offender Status as of January 23, 2008

| | | | Participation Group | | Total |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|-------------------------------|--|--------|
| | | | Non-Participants (n = 405) | Participants in Medication Program (n = 28) | |
| Community Placement | Status as of January 23, 2008 | | | | |
| Community Corrections | Still in Comm. Corrections Program | Count | 127 | 14 | 141 |
| | | % within Group | 43.1% | 56.0% | 44.1% |
| | Paroled | Count | 83 | 5 | 88 |
| | | % within Group | 28.1% | 20.0% | 27.5% |
| | Discharged (incl. parole discharges) | Count | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| | | % within Group | 3.1% | 0.0% | 2.8% |
| | Regressed to prison | Count | 60 | 6 | 66 |
| | | % within Group | 20.3% | 24.0% | 20.6% |
| | Technical revocation (following release to parole) | Count | 9 | 0 | 9 |
| | | % within Group | 3.1% | 0.0% | 2.8% |
| | Revocation for New Felony Crime (following release to parole) | Count | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| | | % within Group | 2.4% | 0.0% | 2.2% |
| | Total Community Corrections | Count | 295 | 25 | 320 |
| | | % within Group | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| Community - Return to Custody Centers | Still in Comm. Corrections Program | Count | | | |
| | | % within Group | | | |
| | Paroled | Count | 41 | 1 | 42 |
| | | % within Group | 37.3% | 33.3% | 37.2% |
| | Discharged (incl. parole discharges) | Count | 31 | 0 | 31 |
| | | % within Group | 28.2% | 0.0% | 27.4% |
| | Regressed to prison | Count | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| | | % within Group | 2.7% | 0.0% | 2.7% |
| | Technical revocation (following release to parole) | Count | 23 | 1 | 24 |
| | | % within Group | 20.9% | 33.3% | 21.2% |
| | Revocation for New Felony Crime (following release to parole) | Count | 12 | 1 | 13 |
| | | % within Group | 10.9% | 33.3% | 11.5% |
| | Total Comm-Return to Custody | Count | 110 | 3 | 113 |
| | | % within Group | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Community Corrections

19 of the 25 offenders participating in the medication program (76%) were still in community corrections or had progressed (paroled or discharged) compared to 219 of the 295 non-participants (74.2%)

Community Return to Custody

One of the 3 offenders participating in the medication program (33.3%) progressed (paroled or discharged) compared to 72 of the 110 non-participants (65.5%)

Overall 71.4% of the participants remained in transition or progressed (20 of 28 offenders), a rate very similar to the non-participants of 71.9% (291 of 405 offenders).

Summary

Efforts to improve coordination with community and mental health treatment providers are ongoing to ensure those offenders most in need of assistance with medication are quickly identified.

The Department continues to review and make minor adjustments in the approval process to provider offender assistance in the most expedient methods possible.

Further research and analysis is needed to determine if this special program for funding psychotropic medications plays a significant role in continuing these offenders' community stabilization and transition.

Due to the timing constraints, the program only benefited 28 offenders in fiscal year 2006-07. In fiscal year 2007-08 the Community Re-Entry staff have implemented and stream-lined the processes to expedite the coordination of these benefits. Through December 2007, 110 offenders have received psychotropic medications under 469 prescriptions. \$65,854.33 has been spent to date this fiscal year, with the total expenditures projected to be approximately \$171,000 for the fiscal year.