

BI achieves great gains at Franklin County Day Reporting Center, study finds

By BI Incorporated

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Chambersburg, Pa. – February 17, 2011 – The Franklin County Day Reporting Center is seeing remarkable improvements in recidivism, according to a study released by county commissioners. BI Incorporated staffs and operates the center, which opened in 2006. According to the study, offenders referred to the BI-operated DRC recidivated at less than one-third the 67 percent national rate and less than half the 48 percent recidivism rate of standard Franklin County probationers.

The three-year study was commissioned by the Franklin County Criminal Justice Advisory Board, funded by a grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and conducted by James L. Jengeleski, Ed.D., and Michael S. Gordon, D.P.A., of Shippensburg University.

Franklin County DRC Director Kimberly Eaton, Ed.D., said these results support previous reports that show the DRC saves the county money, reduces criminal activity, and helps the county keep its jail inmate count down, something few other counties nationwide can say. “The DRC has provided the judicial system with an alternative to incarceration that includes treatment not found anywhere else in the county.”

Researchers found probationers who completed the DRC program recidivated at a rate of 18.2 percent. In comparison, probationers referred to standard probation services and not the DRC program recidivated at a rate of 47.8 percent. National figures indicate two-thirds of probationers released to community supervision fail conditions of release, according to the study.

The study reviewed adult probationers who successfully completed the DRC program from Dec. 16, 2006 to June 1, 2009. Researchers also assessed recidivism rates of inmates released to probation from the Franklin County Jail in 2004. In total, this included 362 DRC participants and 299 inmates released from the jail to standard probation services. Researchers examined DRC, jail and the Franklin County Adult Probation Department statistics and information on new crimes through the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts website.

Through the DRC, the county has reduced jail overcrowding. Before the DRC was implemented the jail’s average daily population was 376 inmates. Within months of referring probationers to the DRC, the jail count dropped. Five years later, the jail count is 366 inmates.

In addition, by leasing its extra jail capacity to other jurisdictions, including Fulton County and the U.S. Marshall Service, the county generated \$910,000 in revenue in 2010. The DRC costs \$29 a day, less than half the cost of the jail, another source of savings.

The DRC was opened in an effort to reduce chronic jail overcrowding, reduce costs, and reduce criminal activity in the area. Specific elements of the DRC, which is open six days a week, include frequent check-ins, drug testing, case management, cognitive behavioral treatment, and other classes designed to reduce criminal risk and guide offenders to productive behavior.

In recent years, Franklin County garnered a best practices award from the National Association of Counties and an award from the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania for reducing its jail population and implementing the DRC program.

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