



University of New Mexico

Institute for Social Research

Prepared for: State of New Mexico and Second Chance Center

October 2008

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For a full discussion of findings please read the full report.

Copies of the full report of the study, *Second Chance Center Preliminary Process Evaluation Study* are available from the Institute for Social Research at: <http://isr.unm.edu/cara/reports.html>

Preliminary Findings

- SCC should clinically screen referred offenders and clinically assess admitted offenders.
- A clinical assessment should include a diagnosis and criteria for a placement level of care.
- Clinical assessments should be conducted by a licensed clinician.
- According to the Urban Institute Criminon contains many elements of effective cognitive behavioral therapy.
- Best practices and the results of this study should be used to inform policy decisions regarding the funding and implementation of programs serving criminal justice offenders in New Mexico including the Second Chance Center.
- SCC needs to refine the length of the program and reject referrals violating eligibility criteria.

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Report in Brief:

Second Chance Center Preliminary Study

Research Overview

In July 2007 the Institute for Social Research at the University of New Mexico received funds from N.M. Highlands University to study the Second Chance Center in Bernalillo County New Mexico. These funds were allocated to N.M. Highlands University for the Second Chance Program in SB 190 (FY 2006).

This study focused on a process evaluation using research methods common for this type of study. Process evaluations are aimed at understanding how programs operate and are necessary before conducting an outcome evaluation that focuses on effectiveness. While we recognize the controversy surrounding the Second Chance Center our process evaluation was not shaped or guided by this controversy.

Program Description

The Second Chance Center (SCC) is designed as a secure, long-term, rehabilitation facility. Typically, defendants who are facing a six months to a year sentence, probation/parole violators, or those in an early release/transition program can be referred to the facility by the judiciary.

The Center is designed to house criminal justice offenders with substance abuse problems and according to program materials excludes sex offenders and most violent offenders. Eligible offenders cannot currently be receiving mental health treatment or medical

treatment that would inhibit them from participating in the program and offenders must have a verifiable substance abuse problem. Eligible offenders should have a minimum six-month sentence or have that much time remaining on a sentence to be eligible.

SCP Modules	Second Chance Program Courses
Drug Rehabilitation Module	Orientation Communication Sauna Detox Advanced Communication A Advanced Communication B
Study Skills Module	Study Skills
Self-Respect Module	Self-Respect 1 Self-Respect 2 Self-Respect 3 Way to Happiness
Life Skills Module	Changing Conditions of Life Ups and Downs Potential Trouble Source Handling
Reintegration Module	Transition Preparedness Life Review

The Second Chance Program consists of five core modules, the *Drug Rehabilitation Module*, the *Study Skills Module*, the *Self Respect Module*, *Life Skills Module*, and the *Reintegration Module*. The first four modules are delivered in the facility and the *Reintegration Module* begins in the facility and is continued post release to reintegrate successful offenders back into their communities.

The Second Chance Program is a non-medical, social rehabilitation model using a manualized treatment approach and does not use licensed counselors or therapists. Much of the program is based upon Criminon and Narconon methods. The Second Chance Program does not use traditional addiction

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- SCC should define acceptable charges for referrals and reject referrals that do not meet eligibility criteria.
- The SCC is the only secure residential treatment facility in the state.
- In approximately one year from discharge 3 program graduates (8.6%) were arrested for new crimes and 8 (22.9%) were arrested on technical probation violations.
- Additional analyses should be conducted comparing the technical violation rates and re-arrest rates of successful students with unsuccessful students.
- The SCC should maintain employ files that include work histories, resumes, and job interviews.
- Only after the program has been fully implemented can an outcome study be conducted to study its effectiveness.
- There has been limited independent research published in peer reviewed journals on the Narconon drug rehabilitation program
- Despite the geographic dispersion of graduates, SCC should make additional efforts to reintegrate offenders back into the community.
- Surveyed students felt they are not being prepared adequately for reintegration.

Target Audience

New Mexico legislators and legislative staff; the Second Chance Center; State and local government officials; and criminal justice practitioners and researchers.

treatment that is based primarily on counseling and nor does it use medications such as methadone or buprenorphine.

The SCC receives its students from judicial referrals and accepts referrals for persons who are either incarcerated or facing incarceration. Referrals to the SCC are accepted from state, magistrate, municipal, metropolitan, federal, and tribal courts. Individuals not involved in the criminal justice system can also be referred to the SCC.

Program Numbers

The program opened in September 2006 and through mid-May 2008, 482 offenders had been referred, 147 had been accepted as students, and 105 students had been discharged from the program. In mid-May 2008, 42 offenders were students in the program.

Offenders were referred to the Center by all 13 Judicial Districts and 5 New Mexico Native American tribes (Jemez, Navajo, Sandia, San Juan, and Ohkay Owingeh). At least one offender was accepted from 11 of the 13 Judicial Districts and 5 New Mexico Native American tribes. The largest number of students was accepted from the Second Judicial District (30), followed by the Eighth Judicial District (26), and the Fourth and Fifth Judicial District with 20 referred students each. These four judicial districts accounted for almost two-thirds of all admitted students. The Eleventh Judicial District Court and the Twelfth Judicial District Court each had one referral accepted, and the Tenth Judicial District Court did not have either of its' two referrals accepted. Both students listed as "out of state" were sentenced to the program from out of state courts and were privately paying for the program. The single private student was not involved in the criminal justice system.

Fifty-three different judges referred the 141 accepted students (this number does not include the private student, 2 out of state students, or 3 students missing this information) with three judges accounting for 21% of the students.

Admitted Students by Judicial District

Judicial District	Count	%
1 st Judicial District	13	7.8
2 nd Judicial District	30	20.8
3 rd Judicial District	5	3.5
4 th Judicial District	20	13.9
5 th Judicial District	20	13.9
6 th Judicial District	2	1.4
7 th Judicial District	2	1.4
8 th Judicial District	26	17.4
9 th Judicial District	12	8.3
10 th Judicial District	0	0.0
11 th Judicial District	1	0.7
12 th Judicial District	1	0.7
13 th Judicial District	4	2.7
Tribal	5	3.5
Out of State	2	1.4
Private	1	0.7

Almost one-third of the accepted students were in the program as a result of a probation violation (i.e. stopped reporting, failed to comply, etc.). DWI offenses made up the next largest category of offenses (16.5%), followed by property offenses (13.7%) drug offenses (12.9%), violent offenses (12.4%), public order offenses (10.8%), and traffic offenses (0.7%). Charges were unknown in 5 cases, 2 cases were out of state, and one case was a private citizen. The program took a wide variety of offenses from fairly minor public order offenses to more serious violent offenses.

Crime Categories

Crime Category	Count	%
Violent	17	12.4
Property	19	13.7
Drug	18	12.9
DWI	23	16.5
Public Order	15	10.8
Traffic	1	0.7
Probation Violation	46	33.1

Students who completed the program comprised 35% of the students who were discharged from the program during the

study period and on average spent almost 215 days in the program and on average took 12 courses. Students who were released from the program spent the second highest average number of days in the program (192.4 days) and took 6.3 courses. This was followed by students who were medically discharged (average length of stay 120.1 days and 3.3 courses), students who were terminated (average length of stay 114.1 days and 3.9 courses), and students who resigned (average length of stay 82.2 days and 2.9 courses).

Discharge Status				
Discharge Status	Count	%	Average Length of Stay	Course Count
Completed	35	35%	214.7	12.0
Medical Discharge	16	16%	120.1	3.3
Released	16	16%	192.4	6.3
Resigned	17	17%	82.2	2.9
Terminated	16	16%	114.1	3.9

A survey administered to program staff and students, designed to measure the social climate of correctional programs like the SCC, found students felt they are not being prepared adequately for reintegration.

A review of security staff and program staff files was completed to document qualifications of staff. Because employee files were incomplete we were not able to report this information.

Preliminary Recidivism

In an approximately one year period three students (8.6%) who completed the program picked up new charges (Burglary, DWI 3rd, and Aggravated Assault), 8 students (22.9%) had technical probation violations, and 24 students (65.7%) did not have a probation violation or new charge. A preliminary analysis that collapsed new charges and probation violations into one category (recidivism) and compared recidivism to discharge status found no statistically significant

differences between discharge status and recidivism. This means students who completed the program were no more likely to have a new arrest or probation violation than a student who resigned from the program or was released. While there were no statistically significant differences a larger percent of students who completed did not pick up a new arrest or probation violation when compared to students who were released or resigned.

Drug Use and Crime

According to a 2005 publication by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) there is strong empirical evidence substance abuse treatment reduces crime. Additionally, researchers from the Treatment Research Institute at the University of Pennsylvania (2005) found substance abuse treatment, results in significant reductions in crime and alcohol/drug use as well as improved ability to function in health and social areas. More intensive treatment is needed for offenders who are in a recurring cycle of crime and drug abuse. Rather than focusing on populations of sporadic users of illegal drugs, it may be more effective for criminal justice programs to focus their resources on preventing continued drug abuse by high-use offenders (CSAT, 2005).

According to the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA) a history of drug use does not in itself indicate the need for drug abuse treatment. Offenders who meet drug dependence criteria should be given higher priority for treatment than those who do not. Less intensive interventions that may include self-help groups may be appropriate for offenders who are not drug dependent. NIDA also notes medications can be an important component of effective drug abuse treatment for offenders because medications allow the bodies of offenders to function normally while being treated. According to NIDA, despite evidence of their effectiveness

for opiates and alcohol addiction medications are under utilized in the criminal justice system.

Research has shown untreated substance abusing offenders are more likely to relapse to drug abuse and return to criminal behavior. This can bring about re-arrest and re-incarceration, jeopardizing public health and public safety and taxing criminal justice system resources. Treatment offers the best alternative for interrupting drug use.

Evidence Based Practices

There is research evidence that some types of programs targeting criminal justice involved offenders do better than other programs. In 2006 the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2006) conducted an assessment of 291 evaluations of all types of adult corrections programs; including drug courts, sex offender treatment programs, and boot camps. Of the programs for drug-involved offenders drug courts reduced recidivism by 10.7% compared to treatment-as-usual groups, in-prison therapeutic communities with community aftercare reduced recidivism by 6.9%, and in-prison therapeutic communities without community aftercare reduced recidivism by 5.2%. Drug treatment in the community reduced recidivism by 12.4% and drug treatment in jail reduced recidivism by 6%. The study also found general and specific cognitive-behavioral treatment programs for the general offender population reduced recidivism by 8.2%. Overall, the general conclusion reached by the study was some adult corrections programs work and some do not and resources should be focused on evidence based programming and ineffective programming should be avoided.

The recently completed report by New Mexico Governor Richardson's Task Force on Prison Reform (Bigelow, 2008) recommends a more concerted

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation study design of the Second Chance Center focuses on a process evaluation. This is necessary to accurately document the development and implementation of the program. The process evaluation is focused on how the program has been implemented and how it operates and how current practices impact the delivery of the program.

To complete our study we reviewed electronic referral records for offenders referred and accepted into the program for the study period. We also reviewed files that included admission information, course participation information, compliance information, and. Each student's court case was also reviewed to fill out court information collected from program files as well as to complete a preliminary review of probation violations and new cases filed. Staff employee files were reviewed and a survey of program staff, security staff, and students was conducted. We also reviewed available program records and conducted a review of available literature.


effort to coordinate state resources and improve the infrastructure to treat the widespread substance abuse and behavioral health needs of individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Further, the report echoes the need noted above to support and fund services and treatments that are evidence based and supported by research.

A recent report by the Urban Institute (LaVigne, Naser, and Owens, 2006) on Criminon noted the Criminon program contains many elements of effective cognitive behavioral therapy. The report notes that perhaps the single deficit of the Criminon program is it does not formally address the continuity of care from prison to the community.

A recent evaluation study of a Narconon drug abuse prevention program in California noted the Narconon drug rehabilitation methodology does not reflect widely accepted medical and scientific evidence and some information is misleading because it is overstated or does not distinguish between drug use and abuse (Wood 2005). Cecchini (2007) in her review of the Hubbard detoxification method notes this method holds promise and that at present, much more is unknown than is known regarding long-term drug retention and effects and this subject deserves careful evaluation given its potential implications for drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation.

According to Narconon International the Narconon Program has one of the highest success rates in the field of drug rehabilitation with outside studies showing 75% of the graduates going on to lead stable, ethical, productive drug-

free lives. Our review of available literature does not support this view. There has been limited independent research published in peer reviewed journals on the Narconon drug rehabilitation program. Much of the literature cited by Narconon is on the drug prevention program and most is not independent research published in peer reviewed journals.

The results of this study as well as other information regarding best practices should be used to inform policy and decisions regarding the funding and implementation of programs serving criminal justice involved offenders in New Mexico including the Second Chance Program. 

References

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SCC Response to this Brief

The Second Chance Program (SCP) would like to thank the ISR for its evaluation of our program during our initial pilot. Though few programs in the State have been evaluated in this manner, SCP wanted independent feedback to provide the best possible service to the State.

There is no other program like this in the State. Due to security concerns Judges are reluctant to sentence their multiple offenders to community rehab programs. All but two referrals to SCP were multiple offenders. We are the only program in the State which provides Judicial Districts long-term rehabilitation in a *secure* setting, a medium-security jail facility. To keep costs low enough for the criminal justice system, SCP uses a manualized approach, addressing both substance abuse issues as well as criminal behavior thus keeping delivery at a lower per person cost than therapist driven treatment. Since our referrals would have gone to jail or prison at a higher cost, we have provided a viable and cost effective alternative to traditional sentencing. An evaluation by the Urban Institute concluded that the manuals align with what is "best practice" in the criminal justice system.

As part of our pilot assessment, SCP has refined our initial screening procedures.; improved the reintegration module including a GED; added more drug education; and will institute many current recommendations from the ISR.

SCP Guarantee: Any graduate who re-offends will be taken back by SCP at no new cost to the government.