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New York State Probation Commission Convenes and Reviews Impact of COVID19

The New York State Probation Commission convened virtually on July 21 for its semi-annual meeting. The state director invited New York State Council of Probation Administrators (NYSCOPA) President Steve Bayle and New York State Probation Officers Association (NYSPOA) President Gladys Larson to address how probation departments and probation officers are responding to COVID-19. Probation directors throughout the state listened in on the Commission meeting. President Bayle stated that directors appreciated the emergency procedures that DCJS released in mid-March. The guidance allows flexibility for directors to consult with county health departments to protect staff and supervised individuals, while ensuring continuity of operations. President Bayle advised that most departments were conducting supervision contacts and home visits electronically to respect social distancing protocols. President Larson reported that counties' policies varied, while noting that Tompkins County continued in-person reporting. She also indicated that counties had reported staff reductions and furloughs for cost savings. Like DCJS, probation departments had taken steps to prepare for a longer period of telecommuting and modified operational procedures, while continuing to offer technical support and guidance to local departments and programs. Staff have been able to offer remote training opportunities focusing on supervision, data entry, impaired driving and probation best practices.

Special points of interest:

- > NYS Probation Commission Meeting
> Caseload Explorer Updates & Reminders
> State Director's Memorandum
> Training Updates

The Implementation of Caseload Explorer (CE) "Check-In" Proves Timely

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DCJS expedited the implementation of Caseload Explorer (CE) "Check-In" in late March 2020 to support web-based reporting by individuals under probation supervision, at no additional expense to probation departments. At that time, AutoMon Inc. conducted statewide training for probation officers and

staff on setting up and using the Check-In product. The most recent CE report indicated that 40 probation departments were actively using the system, effectively leveraging the power of electronic reporting and communication during these challenging times. A recording of the training is available here.

CE Activity by the Numbers: (April to July)

- 86,072 web check-ins
• 110,115 text message reminders and 85,991 email reminders sent to probationers
• 66,848 text messages received from probationers
• 62,535 text messages sent by probation officers

State Provides Virtual Training Day at the 45th American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) Training Institute

DCJS has been approved by the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) to provide virtual training through three workshops on Aug. 25. One of the workshops will include probation commissioners and directors from New York City and Saratoga and Monroe counties sharing their collective responses to

COVID-19. New York State was also selected to provide two “on-demand” trainings, one on Sexual Orientation Gender Identification and Expression (SOGIE) and how to best serve individuals on probation, and another on Systemic Inequity.



APPA has produced an exciting program and will conduct its 45th Training Institute Aug 24-28 in a virtual environment.

READI Chicago Provides Briefing to DCJS

For more information on READI Chicago and the program methodology, click [here](#).

READI Chicago and The University of Chicago Crime and Poverty Lab provided a briefing to DCJS’ Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA), Office of Justice Research and Performance (OJRP) and Office of Public Safety (OPS) staff in July. The READI Chicago program model includes 18 months of paid transitional employment (work

crews and coaching) and cognitive-behavioral therapy sessions, which are held three times a week. READI Chicago utilizes the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute’s Cognitive-Behavioral Interventions - Employment program, which is also used by several of the DCJS-funded Employment Focused Services pro-

grams. The READI Chicago selection process focuses on individuals at highest risk of future gun violence and it relies on the expertise of community-based practitioners, credible individuals for outreach and the Urban Labs Risk Assessment. Preliminary results indicate that READI Chicago affects shooting and homicide victimization rates and improves participants’ safety.

Orange County Probation Department Moves Probation Supervision to the Community



In response to COVID-19, many probation departments have enhanced services and engaged supervised individuals electronically, while also meeting probationers in the community. In Orange County, probation officers averaged 300 home contacts per month from March to June. COVID-19 has

challenged supervision professionals to use other tools for enforcement as they strive for a reduction of recidivism through positive behavioral change.



For additional information, please contact [Leonard Price](#) or [Michele Melendez](#).

Recently, 386 probation and community correction professionals participated in a webinar entitled “The Opioid Epidemic: An update on the Crisis and Medication-Assisted Treatment program,” hosted by DCJS and the State Office of Addiction Services and Support (OASAS) in response to

the growing number of opioid overdose deaths occurring during COVID-19. The training provided a historical overview and update on the status of the opioid epidemic, along with a description of the most prevalent drugs found in overdose victims. It also covered the challenges of addiction for

people diagnosed with substance use disorders, as well as therapeutic options and support services available through the Medication-Assisted Treatment program. The recorded webinar is available on the IJ Portal: Resources >Reference Library > Probation >Training.

Probation Practice Tip – Importance of Collateral Contacts

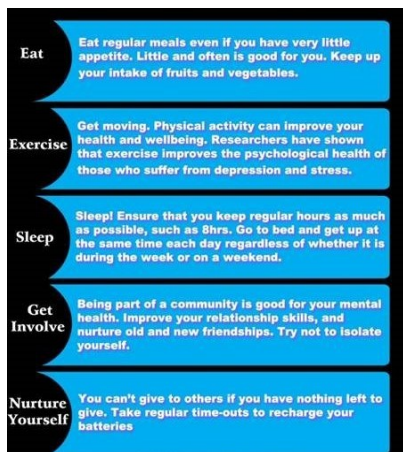
Probation professionals have long relied on collateral contacts to help assess probationers’ compliance and progress and to build a support network for improved probationer outcomes. Since June 1, 2013, the “new” [Title 9 NYCRR Part 351 “Probation Supervision”](#) has recognized the importance of collateral contacts by re-defining the term as “a contact to objectively verify information regarding the probationer with someone or some source other

than the probationer, including the probationer’s compliance with conditions of probation and progress toward achieving the case plan goals.” *The regulation further emphasizes that such collateral contacts are to be “related to the criminogenic needs identified in the case plan.”* In developing a network of collateral contacts for a given probationer, the probation officer must identify what persons or agencies would best serve this func-

tion. Collateral contacts should be assessed, and new contacts should be identified during reassessments, case reviews and other times, as needed.

Probation Practice – Officer Wellness Tips

5 Wellness Tips



Since the arrival of COVID-19, probation departments throughout the state have been faced with many unforeseen challenges. OPCA acknowledges the hard work and commitment that each probation department staff member provides to ensure public safety in our communities. Please remember that your physical and mental health is of the utmost importance. The choices we make every day can help us live

healthier and happier lives – both at work and at home. Resources to assist staff in maintaining wellness and providing peer support are available on the IJ Portal: Resources > Reference Library > Probation > Peer Support & Wellness.

Recent State Director's Memorandum

The following State Director's Memoranda are posted to the IJ Portal: Resources > Reference Library > Probation > Director's Memoranda

- **SDM #2020-9: July 9, 2020 -- Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in New York**

Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA) Training Updates and Schedule

Please feel free to contact the training unit via [email](#) with any suggestions or questions you may have.

In recent months OPCA's Training Unit has persistently worked towards converting several in-person trainings to virtual formats. The first in the series of online training pilots to be converted for online delivery is the DVSI-R End-User Training, which was conducted earlier this month. An Interactive

Journaling Facilitator Training is scheduled for delivery in late September (announcement coming soon). Weeks 3 and 4 of the Fundamentals of Probation Practice Academy are tentatively scheduled to resume online in October. Other virtual trainings that are being considered

include: Basic and Advanced Motivational Interviewing, Thinking for a Change (T4C), NYCOMPAS TFT and End User, Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS), Decision Points – DWI, and Peer Support & Officer Wellness.

Community Dispute Resolution Centers Program (CDRCP) – A Resource for Probation

The New York State Unified Court System's Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution (OADR) established a program in 1981 to fund independent non-profit Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs), to provide mediation and arbitration as court alternatives. The CDRCs assist thousands

of New Yorkers with disputes related to housing, consumer complaints, family and child-custody disputes, visitation, education and elder care, as well as victim-offender dialogue. About half of the cases originate in court and the remainder are self-referrals, according to the [2017-18 Annual Report](#).

There are mediation centers in all 62 counties. A list of local CDRCs is available [here](#).

Research in Brief



Click [here](#), for more information on the National Institute of Justice CrimeSolutions research database.

Alcohol Interventions for Adolescents are Effective

Brief Alcohol Interventions (BAIs) for adolescents and young adults have been rated effective in reducing alcohol use or alcohol-related problems for adolescents and young adults. BAIs are based on elements of cognitive-behavioral ther-

apy, motivational interviewing, the transtheoretical model of behavior change and/or social norms theory. The research is available [here](#).

Early Family/Parent Training Programs Reduce Problem Behaviors

Programs that offer families and parents training

and skills to promote their children's overall health and social skills have been shown to be effective in reducing problem behaviors in children, including conduct issues, delinquency and antisocial behavior. The research is available [here](#).

Master Index File and Caseload Explorer (CE) Data File Security

As we move to a more virtual world, every probation department needs sufficient CE Database Backups in a separate and secure location. [Title 9 NYCRR Section 348.4\(e\)](#): states that "each probation department shall establish an index filing system for all cases which may be established and maintained in an automated system...". All departments should confirm with their local IT department, or AutoMon Inc., that CE is backed up sufficiently, securely and remotely, away from the existing network to prevent a bad actor from encrypting CE with ransomware and wiping the database and its backups.

Family Court Probation Practice Tip

Family Court Juvenile Delinquent (JD) Intake Opened Date – Caseload Explorer (CE)

Intakes received from probation departments must be opened, regardless of the outcome. If a case is referred directly to petition, the intake opened date should be the same as the

closing date. The same holds true if a youth is brought to detention and is petitioned directly to the court. The probation department should still create the Person, Family Case folder, with the same dates for opening and closing. It is important to remember to indicate the reasons why

the case went directly to petition on an I-JD case. For more information, please contact your Juvenile Probation Operations Unit via [email](#). Training and support materials are available on the IJ Portal: Resources > Reference Library > Probation > Presentations.

NYS Empire Plaza lit up displaying NY Tough.



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eFocus is published by the DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA) to further the goal of promoting public safety through probation services and other community corrections programs.

www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/opca

Quick Fact

Did you know that participation in the 2020 Census determines how much federal funding goes to communities across New York State to support critical services – like law enforcement funding, crime victims' assistance and programs that serve victims of domestic and sexual violence, among others – for the next 10 years?

Get counted by responding to the [2020 Census](#).



Photo Credit: Steve Smith, Public Information Officer for the Albany Police Department