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Intensive Parole Model for High Risk Juvenile Offenders: *Interim Outcomes for the First Cohort of Youth*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1997, the Washington State Legislature determined that the system for transitioning the highest-risk youth from state institutions to parole did not provide adequate rehabilitation and public safety.¹ The Legislature found the intensive parole model promoted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to be a promising strategy for reducing recidivism rates for these juvenile offenders.² Intensive parole was funded for up to 25 percent of the highest-risk youth committed to state Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA) custody.³

Elements of Intensive Parole

The intensive parole model employs a *case management system* to facilitate the transition of high-risk delinquents from secure confinement to community supervision. Case management starts when the juvenile first enters an institution, spans confinement, and extends through community supervision. This model is based on the work of David Altschuler and Troy Armstrong⁴ and was adopted in 1994 by OJJDP as a "promising strategy." Outcome research supporting the program's effectiveness in reducing recidivism is still pending.

Washington is the only location in the country where the program is implemented statewide. The following are elements of intensive parole:

- Information management and program evaluation;
- Assessment and selection criteria;
- Individual case planning;
- A mixture of intensive surveillance and services;
- A balance of incentives and graduated consequences;
- Service brokerage with community resources and linkage with social networks; and
- Transition services.

¹ RCW 13.40.212

² David Altschuler and Troy Armstrong, *Intensive Aftercare for High-Risk Juveniles: A Community Care Model* (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, September 1994).

³ RCW 13.40.210

⁴ David M. Altschuler and Troy L. Armstrong, "Intensive Aftercare for the High-Risk Juvenile Parolee: Issues and Approaches in Reintegration and Community Supervision," in *Intensive Interventions with High-Risk Youths: Promising Approaches in Juvenile Probation and Parole*, ed. Troy Armstrong, (Monsey, New York: Criminal Justice Press, 1991).

Staged Evaluation

JRA contracted with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to evaluate the program's implementation, determine whether the program reduces recidivism, and analyze its costs and benefits to taxpayers and crime victims. To determine whether intensive parole reduces recidivism, the Institute compared intensive parole youth with a similar group of youth who did not receive intensive parole. The Legislature specified that JRA report annually on the status of intensive parole beginning December 1, 1999. Institute reports will be completed to meet the legislative schedule. The final report will be completed by 2003. This is the second in the series of annual reports.

1999 Report. The Institute's first report described the intensive parole model and its implementation as of October 1999.⁵ The report found that JRA was implementing the OJJDP intensive parole model as specified in the 1997 legislation in a comprehensive and thorough manner.

2000 Report. This report analyzes interim outcome data for the first cohort of youth placed on intensive community supervision.

Summary of Questions Answered in This Report

The Institute is evaluating JRA's intensive parole program to determine whether it reduces recidivism. However, sufficient time has not elapsed to measure recidivism outcomes. This report takes advantage of interim outcome measures which provide initial information on how the program is changing the behavior of youth. These measures are available from JRA's administrative database for youth placed on intensive parole and a similar group of youth not given intensive parole. The interim outcomes in this report examine problem behaviors of youth. A subsequent report will describe positive behaviors available from JRA's Intensive Parole Supervision Assessment (IPSA).

Group Comparisons

Are the program and control groups similar? Yes, there are only minor differences between the intensive parole (program) and control group youth. The evaluation will statistically adjust for these differences.

Are intensive parole program youth completing their parole supervision within 24 weeks of placement on the parole? Few intensive parole youth (11 percent) were discharged from supervision after 24 weeks. Forty-six percent were on active status, and 39 percent had been placed on inactive status, where there is a new offense pending, their whereabouts is unknown, their parole is revoked, or they are confined in prison, jail, detention, or a mental health facility.

During what time period of parole are comparisons between the groups valid? The program and control groups can be compared during the first 12 weeks on parole. The two groups

⁵ Robert Barnoski, *Evaluating the Washington State Intensive Parole Model for High Risk Juvenile Offenders* (Washington State Institute for Public Policy, November 1999).

cannot be compared at the 24-week point because few control group youth remained on parole.

Supervision Status Changes and Revocations

How does intensive parole affect the likelihood that youth will experience supervision difficulties during the first 12 weeks on parole? Intensive parole does not significantly influence whether youth experience supervision difficulties that place them on inactive status during the first 12 weeks of parole.

How often do intensive parole program youth have their parole revoked within the first 24 weeks on parole? Almost half (47 percent) had at least one parole revocation with youth averaging 1.1 revocations during the first 24 weeks. The average stay in a JRA facility or local detention was 28.4 days.

How does intensive parole affect parole revocations during the first 12 weeks on supervision? The program group had a slightly higher number of revocations to local detention, but not to a JRA facility, than the control group. Intensive parole youth spent slightly more days confined in local detention, but not in JRA facilities, during the first 12 weeks of supervision.

Unauthorized Leaves

How often do intensive parole program youth go on unauthorized leave within the first 24 weeks on parole? Fifty-five percent of the youth had at least one unauthorized leave within the first 24 weeks on parole. Youth averaged 1.0 unauthorized leaves lasting 35 days.

How does intensive parole affect unauthorized leaves during the first 12 weeks of parole? There are no statistically significant differences between the program and control groups regarding the number of times a youth goes on unauthorized leave or the average number of days spent on unauthorized leave—the control group averaged 17.9 days and the program group 21.7 days.

Summary

Overall, the interim outcomes of parole status, revocations, and unauthorized leaves during the first 12 weeks on parole are the same for both the intensive parole and control groups. Previous national research on intensive parole programs has found that the higher levels of supervision can increase these problem behaviors possibly as the result of increased detection. This is not the case with JRA's intensive parole program.