

180542

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | ii |
| PREFACE..... | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 2 |
| CONSISTENT DECISION MAKING | |
| Training in Consistent Decision Making | 4 |
| Results of the Training..... | 5 |
| SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMS | |
| Parolee Partnership Program..... | 6 |
| Prison Parole Network | 8 |
| Residential Multi-Service Centers | 9 |
| Non-residential Multi-Service Centers | 11 |
| Computer Assisted Learning Centers | 11 |
| Employment Services | 13 |
| Program Costs and Number of Participants..... | 13 |
| COST EFFECTIVENESS OF TOTAL PROGRAM | |
| Effect on Return-to-Prison Rates | 15 |
| Cost Savings of Program as a Whole..... | 17 |
| PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| Consistent Decision Making..... | 20 |
| Substance Abuse Treatment Networks | 20 |
| Residential Multi-Service Centers | 20 |
| Non-residential Multi-Service Centers | 21 |
| Computer Assisted Learning Centers | 21 |
| Assistance in Obtaining Employment..... | 21 |
| CONCLUSIONS | 23 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report responds to the "Supplemental Report of the 1996 Budget Act." It provides information on the Department of Corrections' Preventing Parolee Failure Program (PPFP). The Legislature set a due date of April 1, 1997, for delivery of the report to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

The Program combines consistent decision making in response to parole violations with improved delivery of services to parolees. The overall program goal is to prevent parole failure by helping parolees overcome barriers to success and by responding more effectively to parole violations when they do occur.

Formal training for parole supervisors and administrators, along with enhanced management information, provide the means for consistent decision making. The service delivery programs funded by PPFP provide needed resources to help parolees avoid failure and the parole agents to more effectively control those parolees not at risk of engaging in violent or other serious parole violations.

Since the Program began, parole agents and supervisors referred an estimated 31,000 fewer parole violators to the Board of Prison Terms (BPT). This resulted in an average annual reduction of about 11,000 prison bed needs, and a net cumulative savings of about \$74 million over the five-year period from Fiscal Year (FY) 1991-92 through FY 1995-96, after subtracting approximately \$38 million in Program costs from the gross savings of nearly \$113 million.

Service programs provided an average of about \$1,300 in contracted services for each of the approximately 31,000 avoided revocations. This is substantially lower than the approximate costs of \$3,400¹ to the Department for returning a parolee to custody.

The Program's intent is to provide needed resources to manage parolees more efficiently and effectively, consistent with public safety. No single program can achieve the goals of PPFP alone. Likewise, no one exposure to a program will necessarily prevent an offender's failure on parole. The Department evaluated each program; some of those evaluations included an assessment of the individual program's effect on recidivism. This report describes those evaluations. In sum, expected services were provided to more parolees than had been planned. In addition, each of the individual programs evaluated with regard to recidivism showed a statistically significant reduction in returns to prison, ranging from 8 to 10 percentage points.

¹ This is the estimated "overcrowding" prison cost for 4.3 months minus marginal parole costs for 4.3 months. The average time served back in prison for a parole revocation not involving a new court commitment to prison is 4.3 months.

The Department seeks to continue and improve PPFP. Improvement of the components of the Program will be guided by the findings from the evaluations presented in this report.

In conclusion, PPFP resulted in net savings over Program costs. The Parole and Community Services Division (P&CSD) improved its decision making in response to parole violations. The component programs for helping prevent parolee failures are operating effectively. P&CSD intends to continue and improve them. In the last two calendar years, PPFP has saved over \$7.0 million dollars each year, in excess of Program costs. While service delivery components of the overall Program were effective in helping individual parolees avoid failure, by themselves those components were not cost effective. The Program produces savings in excess of costs by improving decision making and making resources available to parole agents and their supervisors so they can operate in a more cost effective manner while not increasing the risk to public safety. P&CSD expects these savings to continue--we believe terminating the Program would reduce the chances of parolee success and could result in increased returns to prison.

PREFACE

This report is in response to the following request from the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

Preventing Parolee Failure. The California Department of Corrections (CDC) shall (a) complete studies of the recidivism rates and cost-effectiveness of the Preventing Parolee Failure pilot programs in a timely fashion and (b) present a report for the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) and the Legislature's fiscal committees by April 1, 1997, outlining its recommendations as to whether each pilot project should be discontinued, modified and tested further, or expanded to serve a larger statewide parolee population. The report should estimate the increases or reductions in department funding and personnel that would be necessary to accomplish each of its recommendations.

The overall goals of the Preventing Parolee Failure Program, as set forth in the Budget Change Proposal (BCP), were to reduce parolee failures and subsequent returns to prison, without increasing risk to society. The premise was that the Program would (1) improve decision making on parole violations and (2) provide community-based services to parole units to work more effectively with parolees in achieving those goals.

The Preventing Parolee Failure Program is composed of five separate components, operating independent of each other, but with the same goal, of helping parolees to avoid parole failure. For the purposes of this study, the evaluation has been structured to assess the integrity of the entire Program and not individual components for recidivism information and cost effectiveness. This is critical to this analysis because: 1) decision making on parole violations has a very strong influence on returns to prison, independent of the effectiveness of any one service-delivery program; 2) the evaluation of the effect of each program by itself on individual offenders during any one part of their time on parole does not capture the gains from having multiple kinds of services available to many parolees over their total time on parole; and 3) the Program as a whole gives parole agents alternatives for helping parolees with multiple survival problems. Thus, as in this study, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1980s, the parole revocation rate in California for adult offenders spiraled upward to a high of almost 70 out of every 100 offenders on parole. Senator Robert Presley initiated hearings in 1989 in recognition of the high cost of incarcerating these parole violators. The hearings, held in Ontario and San Francisco, explored reasons for the increasing rate and sought to identify possible solutions. The testimony concluded the parole system in California needed more definitive decision-making criteria to guide revocation decisions. The experts also called for an increase in community-based services and resources so parole agents would have more options for controlling parolees with multiple barriers to parole success.

The Department provided testimony on barriers to parolee success, using information gathered by P&CSD task force reports. The task force identified the following major barriers to parolee success:

- 85 percent of parolees were chronic substance abusers.
- 70-90 percent of all parolees were unemployed.
- Over one-half of all parolees read below the sixth grade level and therefore, could not fill out job applications or compete in the job market.
- 10 percent of parolees statewide were homeless; homelessness was as high as 30-50 percent in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Testimony at the hearings concluded that repeated parolee failure is prevalent among the approximately 20 percent of all parolees whose parole violations are principally for:

- Chronic substance abuse.
- Failure to follow the parole agents' instructions.
- Otherwise evading or avoiding parole supervision.
- Violating other special conditions of parole.

Many of these parolees have high at-risk characteristics which potentially leads to increased propensity of criminal behavior. For instance, involvement in drug use and inability to meet basic survival needs might result in property crimes and other behavior that can escalate into a more violent means to obtain money for drugs and basic survival. Unemployed, addicted, unmotivated, and unable to compete in the job market, these predatory parolees are a high risk to the safety of California citizens and a high cost to taxpayers. Such parolees in 1989 filled over 2,000 prison beds at a cost of over \$20 million per year to the public.

In 1991, the Department submitted a BCP requesting funds for services in the areas of substance abuse treatment, employment preparation through computer literacy training, employment placement, and residential services for homeless parolees. The BCP proposed to reduce the cost

of parolee failures while not increasing the risk of harm to public safety. This effort is referred to as the Preventing Parolee Failure Program. This report describes the total Program and assesses its effects on various outcomes. The BCP did not say the Program as a whole, or any of its components, would reduce returns to prison by any specified amount. Nonetheless, the Program did achieve significant reductions in returns.

CONSISTENT DECISION MAKING

Decision-making practices of parole units and community resources available to the parole agent have a strong influence on parolee success. Because these influences are strong, this program provides training of parole agents and their supervisors to emphasize the use of community resources as options for:

- Dealing with parolee failures.
- Providing substance abuse treatment.
- Making literacy training available.
- Placing parolees in jobs.
- Offering residential assistance for homeless parolees.

The principle is that parolee failure results from multiple problems that must be dealt with in multiple, comprehensive ways. The P&CSD also targets parole agent supervisors statewide to better align the goals just stated with decision-making regarding parolee failures. Training emphasizes identification of parolees with high risk of parole failure and focuses resources on them to prevent failures while also improving parole staff's ability to identify those parolees who should be returned to prison. The goal is better public protection and to help agents use new resources unavailable to them before the inception of PPFP.

Training in Consistent Decision Making

The following is a description of the training procedures. Eighteen parole unit supervisors with average parole violations rates formed nine peer review teams. Training deliberately paired supervisors from different parts of the State. They received one day of preliminary instruction.

Trainers selected cases from 20 other parole units. Twenty recently processed parole violations from each unit were selected using stratified sampling procedures. Unit supervisors provided the reviewers with all the information used to make case decisions. The reviewers used a structured questionnaire to evaluate the agent's processing of the alleged violation. Each reviewer made an independent assessment of the case using the questionnaire. Each also made an independent judgment on the action they would have taken. The trainers conducted exit interviews at each parole unit on those cases in which both reviewers disagreed with the original case decision.

Reviewers met collectively in two groups with administrators for one day the following week to discuss their observations. Trainers gave reviewers and unit supervisors tabulations from the questionnaire.

At the same time, five parole administrators developed a curriculum and team taught two-day sessions across the State until all supervisors had been trained. Training incorporated specially-

made videos, lectures, discussions, role playing, practice exercises and critiques. The curriculum focused on the goals of parole, consistent decision-making, and proper documentation.

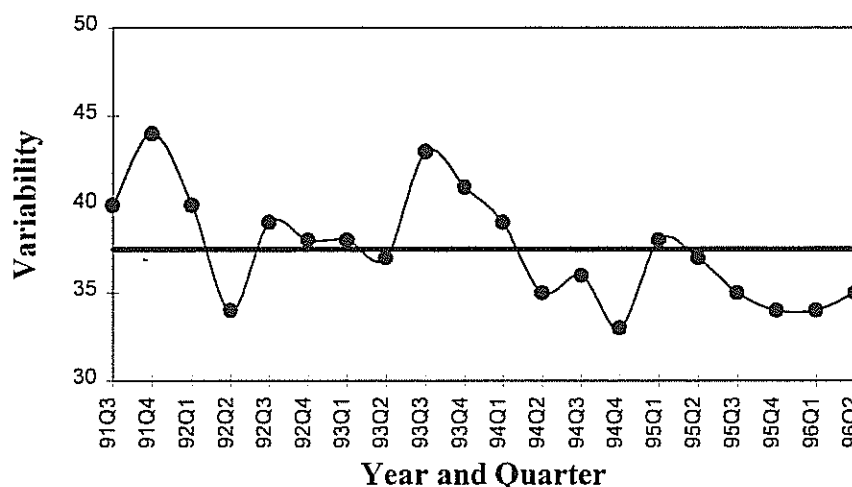
The Parole Division includes the principles of consistent decision making in the parole agent training academy. The Parole Regions train all new unit supervisors in consistent decision making. As of May 1997, consistent decision making training will be a basic part of the newly established training symposia for new supervisors.

Another part of the training gives quarterly feedback to parole units, district administrators, and parole regions on their parole revocation decisions and those of their peers. This feedback holds decision makers responsible for their decisions.

Results of the Training

Generally, training in decision making should result in less variation across parole units in their return rates. When decisions about parolee behavior are judged by different criteria in different parole units, units will vary more in their return-to-prison rates as a result. When the decisions are made using the same criteria, units will vary less in their return rates. That variability across parole units should decline over time as the training turns into practice. Figure 1 shows a measure of variability in return rates, in relation to the mean (represented as a solid straight line), across parole units over quarters, for FYs 1991-92 through 1995-96. The higher the value, the higher the variability; the lower the value, the lower the variability. Although the trend is somewhat irregular, the rates became less variable in 1994 and remained so thereafter. The Program brought about a decrease in variation from parole unit to parole unit in decision making on parole violations.

Figure 1
Variability in Return Rates across Parole Units



A later section of this report evaluates consistent decision making, as a part of the whole Program, in terms of returns to prison resulting from parolee failures.

SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMS

Parolees have many impediments to success on parole. These include drug addiction, weak social ties, inadequate educational attainment, and difficulties in finding legitimate work. PPFPP provides P&CSD with resources to assist parolees in overcoming or dealing more effectively with those obstacles. Parole agents and their supervisors can use the same resources to devise programs for parole violators (who do not pose a threat of violent or otherwise serious criminal behavior) in place of returning such parolees to prison.

The following describes how these programs operate and various measures of their effectiveness:

- Parolee Partnership Program (substance abuse treatment network).
- Prison Parole Network (substance abuse treatment network).
- Multi-Service Centers (primarily for homeless parolees).
- Computer-Assisted Learning Centers.
- Employment Assistance Program.

Parolee Partnership Program

This program provides substance-abuse treatment for parolees in San Diego County. It began operation in 1992. A private vendor operates the Program using principles of managed care and case management. The vendor, Mental Health Systems, subcontracts with other providers to provide outpatient, residential, and detoxification treatment services and facilities. The Program augments the abilities of parole agents by 1) seeking out parolees who have problems with substance abuse, 2) determining the kind of help those parolees need, 3) impelling them into the most relevant programs, and 4) monitoring their continuing participation. Program staff also keep parole agents aware of the parolees' progress, or lack thereof, in the program. Support services, such as education and vocational training, physical and mental health services, social and recreational services, and transportation are provided directly by the vendor or through referral to other community resource agencies.

Once a potential participant is identified, the offender meets with a recovery advocate who reviews the application. After checking with the parole agent, the advocate enrolls the parolee and provides a psychosocial assessment to determine the most appropriate kind of treatment. The parolee continues in the program until he or she completes it, drops out, or is returned to custody. Typically, the time limit is 180 days of treatment. The advocate motivates the offender to continue in treatment for so long as necessary and keeps the parole agent aware of the parolee's progress.

Support for the Program is provided by an interagency agreement with the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, which provides CDC funds to Mental Health Systems. The Program served about 700 offenders in FY 1995-96, which is more than two times the number promised in the BCP that established PFP. The cost was about \$2,100 per offender.

Based on a study by San Diego County, only about ten percent of the participants are employed when they enter the program. Nearly one-half have no permanent residence on admission. Two-thirds are under 36 years of age at admission. The three primary drugs of abuse are heroin, methamphetamine, and cocaine or crack. They have used drugs for about 11 years, on average.

The Parolee Partnership Program provides additional substance-abuse treatment otherwise not available to parolees. It does not supplant already available resources. The other resources can provide some services to parolees, but the demand for treatment programs is so great in San Diego that other programs could not meet the Department's needs for its parolees.

Table 1 shows the return-to-prison rates for a sample of Program participants compared to a sample of non-participants paroled to San Diego who also were substance abusers and who had been on parole for about the same amount of time the participants had been when they entered the Program. The treatment sample consists of all parolees who entered the Program and stayed in it for at least seven days or longer from April 1994 through August 1995.

The percentage of parolees placed in the Parolee Partnership Program who were returned to prison was nearly eight percentage points lower than the return-rate for the comparison group. This difference is statistically significant.²

| Table 1 | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Returns to Prison during One-Year Follow-up Period for Parolee Partnership Program (substance abuse treatment network) | | | |
| Return Status | Treatment Group | Comparison Group | Difference |
| Pct. Returned | 35.1% | 42.8% | 7.7% |
| Pct. Not Returned | 64.9% | 57.2% | -7.7% |
| Number of Parolees | 357 | 357 | |

The Parolee Partnership Program served about 700 parolees in FY 1995-96 at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million. Applying the 7.7 percentage point reduction in returns-to-prison to the number of parolees served yields an estimate of 54 returns to prison avoided. They would have served an average of 4.3 months back in prison; instead they remained on parole. The annual prison "overcrowding" costs are \$11,295. The annual marginal parole costs are \$1,831. Summing the prison costs avoided and adding the parole costs, the estimated net savings were

² The values presented in this table were derived from a combination of multiple logistic regression using the Statistical Analysis System and conversion of the resulting odds ratio for the treatment variable to adjusted return rates using a method presented by Statistical Methods for Rates and Proportions, Fleiss pp. 68-74.

about \$180,000. The costs of this single program were not recouped. However, this must be considered in light of the earlier discussion of the most appropriate way of evaluating the effectiveness of the Program as a whole.

Prison Parole Network

The Prison-Parole Network began operation in 1992. Eight community-based providers offer services to female and male civilly committed addicts at the California Rehabilitation Center and on parole. It also serves men and women on felony parole. It provides a full array of community-based substance-abuse services, including assessments, case conferences, and placements in residential, outpatient, and alcohol- and drug-free living centers. A central intake unit coordinates placements for civilly committed addicts. This includes full-time intake and assessment services at the California Rehabilitation Center.

Services are provided through an interagency agreement with the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, which provides Department of Corrections funds to Los Angeles County to contract with providers. The County also audits performance and disburses funds.

As with the ParoleE Partnership Program in San Diego, this Program provides additional substance-abuse services. It does not supplant. Again, the need for the additional funding provided by this Program arises from the lack of sufficient substance-abuse treatment programs in Los Angeles County. Without this Program, the needs of many parolees for substance-abuse treatment would not be met, which could lead to additional criminal conduct.

The Program served about 600 offenders in fiscal year 1995-96, which is two times the number promised in the BCP that established PFPF. The cost was about \$3,000 per offender.

Most participants were cocaine or heroin users. About an equal number received outpatient and residential services. About three-fourths had only one treatment episode.

Table 2 shows the return-to-prison rates for a sample of Program participants compared to a sample of nonparticipants paroled to Los Angeles who also were substance abusers and had been on parole for about the same amount of time participants were when they entered the Program. The treatment sample consists of all parolees who entered the Program and stayed in it for at least seven days from December 1994 through October 1995.

The percentage of parolees placed in the Prison Parole Network who were returned to prison was nearly 10 percentage points lower than the return-rate for the comparison group. This difference is statistically significant.³

³ The values presented in this table were derived from a combination of multiple logistic regression using the Statistical Analysis System and conversion of the resulting odds ratio for the treatment variable to adjusted return rates using a method presented by Statistical Methods for Rates and Proportions, Fleiss pp.68-74

these potentially predatory parolees off the streets at night when criminal activity is most likely to take place. In addition, residence at the program allows the parole agent to provide much closer supervision.

Professionally trained staff, led by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, develop needs assessments and education and treatment plans with the parolees and parole agents. Structured interventions help parolees recognize their responsibilities to themselves and the community; to explore their decisions and choices, and to learn new skills and establish plans for long-term recovery from addiction. Center staff routinely confer with the residents' parole agent and parolees participate in planning their program, measuring progress, and planning for transition to employment and eventual stable housing in the community. Upon return into the community, parolees participate in 90 days of aftercare services on an outpatient basis. The Program has an assigned parole agent who supervises the parole of all residents and has a strong presence in the operations of the Program.

Residential multi-service centers are in San Francisco (57 beds), San Jose (25 beds), Fresno (28 beds) and Los Angeles (50 beds), for a total of 160 beds statewide. The typical offender is 35 years old and committed to prison for property or drug offenses. Approximately 15 percent of the participants are women. The average length of stay in these programs is about 60 days. Almost every parolee receives drug treatment; 40 percent participate in the computer-assisted learning centers; most receive employment preparation, and 27 percent achieve employment after making major strides toward recovery from addiction. Parolees with longer periods of residence demonstrated the most improvement in recovery and developing skills for independent living.

The Program served about 800 offenders in FY 1995-96, which is 1.6 times the number promised in the BCP that established PFPF. The cost was about \$3,400 per offender.

The Program's effect on return-to-prison rates was assessed by comparing 315 parolees who spent more than a few days in the Program and who had been released on parole before 1993. The comparison group was matched to the treatment group on parole release date, commitment offense type, county of commitment, whether or not they were first or re-releases to parole, age, and race/ethnicity. Table 3 shows the results.

| Table 3 Returns to Prison during One-Year Follow-up Period for Residential Multi-Service Centers (for homeless parolees) | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Return Status | Treatment Group | Comparison Group | Difference |
| Pct. Returned | 42.0% | 50.0% | 8.0% |
| Pct. Not Returned | 58.0% | 50.0% | -8.0% |
| Number of Parolees | 315 | 315 | |

The Multi-Service Centers served about 800 parolees in FY 1995-96 at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million. Applying the 8.0 percentage point reduction in returns-to-prison to the number of

parolees served yields an estimate of 64 returns to prison avoided. They would have served an average of 4.3 months back in prison; instead they remained on parole. The annual prison "overcrowding" costs are \$11,295. The annual marginal parole costs are \$1,831. Summing the prison costs avoided and adding the parole costs, the estimated net savings were about \$220,000. The costs of this single program were not recouped. However, this must be considered in light of the earlier discussion of the most appropriate way of evaluating the effectiveness of the Program as a whole.

Non-residential Multi-Service Centers

Although the original BCP sought to implement a non-residential multi-service center, requests for proposals failed to produce a viable program due to community opposition to placement of this type of program in Santa Ana or Long Beach. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to obtain bids, this program concept was abandoned. The Program shifted funds to the computer-assisted literacy program, in pursuit of increased employment preparation for parolees.

Computer Assisted Learning Centers

Computer-assisted instruction is a sound way to respond to parolees' lack of employment and their inability to compete successfully in the job market. Unlike the child in elementary school who learns best in sequential mastery of subjects, the adult learner has learning deficits or "holes in his learning." The computer system identifies the parolees' learning deficits and provides tailored lesson plans, while providing further assistance in workbooks. In this way, the adult learner moves from a basic non-reader to general educational development (GED) mastery in a matter of months.

These programs began operation in 1991. Presently, there are ten sites in the major population centers of the State. They provide computer-assisted education in:

- Grammar usage
- Reading
- Spelling
- Phonics
- Writing skills
- Mathematics
- Life skills (personal survival and employability)
- Skills in finding information
- Opportunity to explore career goals

- Assistance in job searching

The computer program has several features that are especially useful in working with undereducated adults:

- Support for nontraditional learning environments and methods
- Skill development keyed to the learner's individual needs
- Self-paced programs
- Flexible time frames to accommodate adult schedules
- Small, sequential learning increments
- Immediate feedback during learning activities
- Practical applications of basic skills
- Relevant adult content in the learning materials

The typical parolee spends about 40 hours to accomplish approximately 60 lessons. They gain about two grade levels in reading in 13 hours on the computer; math takes 11 hours for a two-grade-level improvement. Seven hours on the computer increases reading level by one grade. For math, six hours produces a gain of one grade level.

Parolees spent an average of 41 hours on the computer in addition to doing workbook exercises. As a result, on the average, they gained two grade levels in reading. Also, nearly 800 parolees obtained employment, either through their efforts or via referral by the learning center teacher to an Employment Development Department (EDD) Job Specialist assigned to the parole office. A total of 42 parolees successfully obtained their GED, thereby significantly boosting their competitiveness in the job market.

From March 1996 through February 1997, over 2,300 parolees participated in literacy training which included employment preparation, at a cost of about \$650 per student. The number of students was about 1.7 times the number indicated in the BCP that established PPFP. This could be due, in part, to the augmentation from the discontinued nonresidential multi-service center program discussed earlier.

Education provides a foundation for obtaining jobs, keeping them and surviving in the community. Correctional research generally supports this view. Few studies have found a negative effect. The goal of the computer assisted learning centers was to help parolees rapidly increase basic educational skills so the parolees could improve their employment opportunities. Thus, they were evaluated in terms of their primary goal. They met their primary goal, as indicated in the preceding. On the average, the parolees completed 40 hours of computer education and increased their educational levels by two grade levels. Thus these learning centers augment the effectiveness of the other parts of the program in reducing parolee failures.

Employment Services

The PFPF partially funds the Jobs Plus Program. The Program provides job assistance to inmates nearing release on parole and to parolees. In FY 1995-96, program staff had initial interviews or provided orientations for over 1,200 parolees. The Jobs Plus Program helped parolees obtain over 500 jobs during fiscal year 1995-96, at an average cost of \$600 per offender. Jobs typically offered to parolees were permanent, full-time, and not subsidized. To accomplish its objectives, the Program offers transportation, meals, clothing and tools needed for work, workshops on how to get a job, and referrals to other organizations, when needed. In FY 1995-96, the average hourly wage at initial placement was about \$6.30. Overall, the Program was successful in placing 1.3 times more parolees in jobs than had been proposed in the BCP that established PFPF.

The Parole Division also contracts with the EDD to help parolees obtain employment. Experienced job placement specialists work in parole unit offices to provide services to parolees in need of work. The specialists utilize and maintain their resources for identifying jobs that are available to parolees. The program results in placing thousands of parolees in jobs each year. The average hourly wage for those jobs, when the program was evaluated last, was about \$6.30 (in 1994). Nearly 60 percent of the jobs involved clerical or sales work, service jobs, structural work, and packaging and handling. Just over ten percent were casual labor jobs. Two-thirds were full-time jobs that averaged 75 days in length, opposed to part-time jobs averaging 57 days. Only about one-fourth were in relatively low paying service jobs. The average cost of a job placement through the EDD program was about \$350 per placement. This compares very well to EDDs 1994 cost of approximately \$600 per placement for the general population, excluding parolees. The much higher cost for the general population is significant given the poor employment history and educational record of parolees.

Because the EDD is not a part of the PFPF, it will not be described here in any detail. However, it may be said that the program offers very similar services to those provided by Jobs Plus and it is well received by both parolees and parole staff.

Clearly the CDC's EDD program is significantly more cost-effective than the CDC's Job Plus Program. CDC will further explore these two programs as means for providing employment assistance to parolees needing jobs.

Program Costs and Numbers of Participants

Table 4 summarizes the current costs of each program along with information on the number of offenders and *per capita* costs. The number of participants is for the most recent 12 month period available; all are for fiscal year 1995-96 or more recent. The planned number of participants for each program is from the BCP that established the Program. For ease of reading, the budgets and numbers of participants are rounded to even numbers.

| Table 4 Summary Information on Program Costs, Number of Sites and Number of Participants <i>(based on most recent annual data)</i> | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Measures | Parolee Partnership Program | Prison Parole Network | Multi- Service Centers | Computer Learning Centers | Jobs Plus | TOTAL* |
| Annual Budget | \$1,500,000 | \$1,800,000 | \$2,600,000 | \$1,500,000 | \$300,000 | \$7,700,000 |
| Number of Sites or Providers | 9 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 37 |
| Number of Participants | 700 | 600 | 800 | 2,300 | 500 | 4,900 |
| Planned Number of Participants | 300 | 300 | 500 | 1,350 | 400 | 2,850 |
| Ratio of Actual to Planned Number | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.8 |
| Cost per Site | \$166,667 | \$225,000 | \$650,000 | \$150,000 | \$50,000 | \$248,333 |
| Cost per Participant | \$2,143 | \$3,000 | \$3,250 | \$652 | \$600 | \$1,929 |

* Figures reported in the TOTAL column for ratio of actual to planned number, cost per site, and cost per participant are averages computed across the five programs.

As indicated in the preceding discussion of the programs, all exceeded the original goals for the number of participants. The Table also shows that the treatment networks and multi-service centers are more costly than the other two programs, as would be expected, given the kinds of services provided.

COST EFFECTIVENESS OF TOTAL PROGRAM

As stated earlier in this report, the overall purpose of the various programs is to increase consistent decision making and to prevent parolee failures. Three of the service delivery programs were expected to have a rather direct effect on the likelihood of a parolee engaging in criminal conduct. Those programs were found to decrease recidivism. Two of the other programs were not expected to have a direct impact on recidivism. Thus, they were evaluated in terms of their proximate goals -- providing training to parolees in educational basics and obtaining jobs for parolees. However, the principle measure of the effectiveness of the Program as a whole is the return-to-prison rate. Returns represent failure of parolees to refrain from criminal conduct, thereby requiring their return to prison.

Effect on Return-to-Prison Rates

As was expected, the return-to-prison rate declined during the first two-years of the Program.⁴ No doubt, the emphasis on consistent decision making was the primary reason for this very significant reduction. About two years after PPFP started, the rate began to increase and it continued upward for at least two years. On its surface, this seems to imply strongly that PPFP was no longer effective. Almost certainly, such a conclusion would be incorrect. Certainly the Department did not cease its training and emphasis on the necessity of making well informed, consistent decisions. Nor did the Department reduce the services made available by the Program to parolees. As the two basic parts of the Program were not changed, the effectiveness of the Program should not have changed, all else being equal. Perhaps the data needs to be examined from a different perspective. As the following analysis shows, there is at least one other way of looking at the data that reaches a very different conclusion.

As just indicated, the overall increase in return rates could obscure the effect of the Program on return rates. To separate out the effects the Program, the following analysis compares the return-to-prison rates for the parole units with and without PPFP programs. If the overall increase in returns eliminated the PPFP effect on revocation rates, then the return-rate should go up equally for units with and without PPFP. If PPFP still affected returns after the increase, then the growth

⁴ The return-to-prison rate is the number of returns to prison during a given period divided by the average number of parolees on parole during that period. Returns to prison include returns to custody by the Board of Prison Terms for parole violations and returns to prison pending a parole revocation hearing by the Board. Included in the latter are returns for placement in short-term Substance Abuse Treatment and Control Units. It excludes parolees returned to prison with a new court-imposed prison term. The average daily population includes all California felon and civil addict parolees supervised in California, including those at large. It excludes parolees from other states, parolees with active holds placed by the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, and other small programs. These types were excluded as they are not assigned to a standard parole unit office. This is necessary as the unit of analysis for this evaluation is the standard parole unit. For these reasons, the rates used in this analysis differ somewhat from the normally published rates.

in PPFP units should be lower than the rise for the units without PPFP. As shown in Figure 2, the data supports the latter proposition. PPFP parole units had lower return rates after the overall increase in return rates, while the units without PPFP were considerably higher. On the average, the reduction in the annualized rate was about seven per hundred parolees for each quarter of calendar years 1995 and 1996.

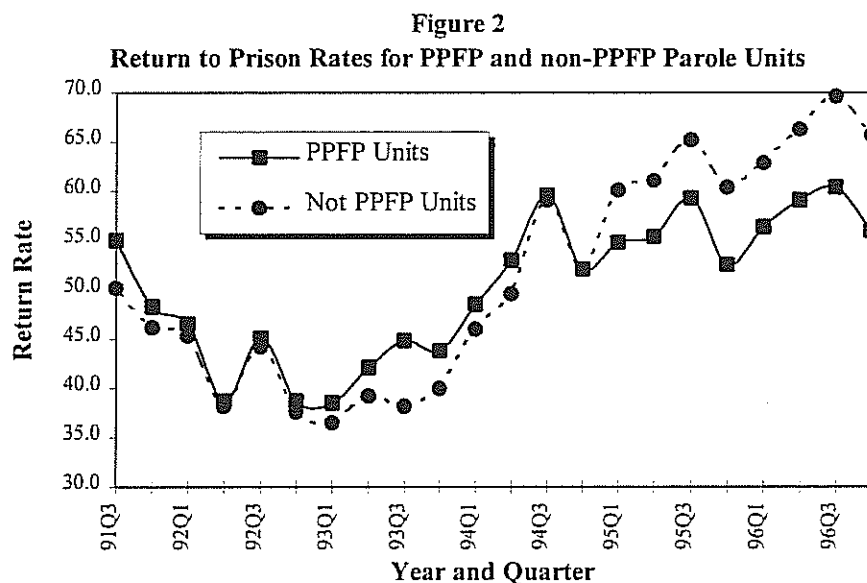
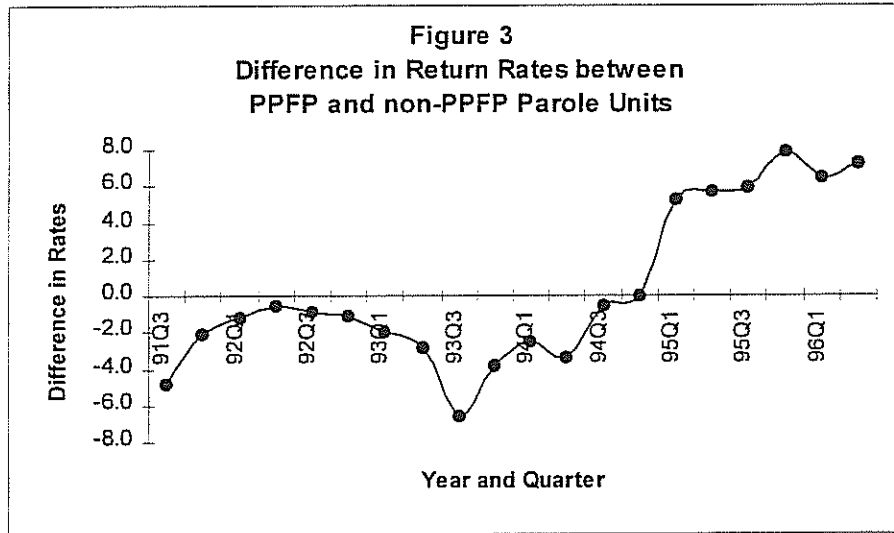


Figure 2 also shows at least three other facts that merit some discussion. First, P&CSD put PPFP programs in parole units with the highest return rates. Second, the return rate declined over several quarters for both PPFP and non-PPFP parole units, although the rate of decline was greater in the former. Subsequently, the rates for both sets of parole units were very close, until the rates began to increase again. The decline in rates for both kinds of units is consistent with the emphasis on consistency in decision making and providing services to help parolees avoid parole failure. The subsequent rapid increase in return rates for the units without PPFP provides evidence that PPFP continued to have an effect on returns despite the overall increase in return rates.

Figure 3 shows the differences in quarterly, annualized return-to-prison rates between the parole units with PPFP and those without the Program. A negative difference indicates PPFP units had a higher return rate than units without PPFP. Conversely, a positive difference means the non-PPFP units had a higher rate. The trend favors PPFP units starting in late 1994 and the differences generally continue to increase thereafter through the end of the series.



This trend toward PPFP units having a lower return rate is consistent with the implementation of the Program. The first Programs began operation in early 1991. All had started by the second quarter of 1992 and they became fully operational by the fall of 1994.

Cost Savings of Program as a Whole

The Department estimates it avoided a net average of \$14 million annually in institution bed costs over the past five fiscal years. These calculations assume the return-to-prison rate in the fiscal year before the Program started would have continued in the following five years. On this basis, the Program achieved the most significant net savings during the first three years. As reported in the preceding, the overall rate began to increase around FY 1993-94. Nonetheless, the Program still saved about \$74 million in prison costs over the costs of the Program during the last five fiscal years which represents net savings after subtracting the cost of the Program, (\$38.5 million), from the gross savings of \$113 million. Table 5 summarizes the data.

| Table 5 Summary of Program Savings and Costs over Five Fiscal Years | |
|--|---------------|
| Source of Savings and Costs | Amount |
| Number of returns to prison avoided | 31,199 |
| Number of prison beds saved | 11,180 |
| Prison bed costs saved | \$112,864,569 |
| Program costs | \$38,500,000 |
| Net savings | \$74,364,569 |

Even after the overall increase in return rates that began around 1993, PPFP was successful in reducing returns from what they otherwise would have been had the Program not existed. The

lower return rates in the last two calendar years for PFPF units represents savings well in excess of Program costs, as shown in Table 6. The estimated savings of \$15.6 and \$21.3 million in 1995 and 1996 exceeded program costs of \$7.7 million per year by about \$7.9 and \$13.6 million, respectively.

| Table 6 Estimated Savings in Prison Bed Costs in Last Two Calendar Years | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|----------|------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Calendar Year | Parolees in PFPF Units | Parole Unit Return Rates | | Difference | Number of Returns Avoided | Prison Bed Savings | Gross Cost Savings | Program Costs | Net Savings |
| | | PFPF | non-PFPF | | | | | | |
| 1995 | 72,848 | 55.5% | 61.7% | -6.2% | 4,531 | 1,624 | \$15.6 M | \$7.7 M | \$7.9 M |
| 1996 | 77,033 | 58.0% | 66.2% | -8.2% | 6,282 | 2,251 | \$21.3 M | \$7.7 M | \$13.6 M |
| Returns Avoided equals the product of the difference in return rates times the number of parolees in PFPF units. The assumption is that return rates for non-PFPF units are what the rates for PFPF units would have been had it not been for the Program. Saving equals the product of the number of returns avoided times the average length of time back in prison (4.3 months) times the cost of imprisonment per month minus the cost of parole per month, using "overcrowding" costs. The computations were done on a quarterly basis and then summed for the annual totals; consequently the number of returns avoided reported in the table vary slightly from multiplying the number of parolees by difference in return rates. | | | | | | | | | |

The service programs provided an average of about \$1,200 in contracted services for each of the approximately 31,000 avoided revocations. This is substantially lower than the approximate costs of \$3,400 to the Department for returning a parolee to custody.

It seems reasonable to expect this trend to continue, producing ongoing cost savings to the Department. Thus, despite the increase in return-to-prison rates that occurred about two years after the introduction of the Program, it remains notably cost effective. If these programs were not available to parole agents and supervisors, the return rate could increase.

Three of the individual programs reduced returns-to-prison, but not by enough to recoup program costs from the resultant savings in prison costs. Despite the lack of cost effectiveness of these individual programs, PFPF as a whole achieved a marked reduction in returns to prison that more than recovered the costs of the total Program. This apparent inconsistency may reflect a difference in perspectives. The individual program evaluations essentially asked if participation in each of the individual programs during a particular period in the offender's time on parole affected that parolee's likelihood of violating parole.

The part of the study that looked at overall return rates took a different perspective. It looked at groups of parolees for whom the agent had access to additional community resources with another group of parolees whose agents did not have that access. This resulted in comparing groups of parolees who had opportunities obtain various kinds of services at different times to help them deal with their many problems to another group of parolees who were in parole units which did not have the same resources to provide such services. This may be a more appropriate way to assess the effectiveness of programs intended to help parolees with many problems at different times in their lives.

There is another reason the Program as a whole was very cost effective while the individual service programs were not. The training in consistent decision making affects all agents in how they deal with potential and actual parole violators. The Program makes the parole agents, and their supervisor, keenly aware of the results of their decisions to return parolees to prison. Instead of returning parolees to prison for minor violations resulting from their problems of maintaining personal hygiene, having a place to stay, obtaining food to eat, coping with their substance abuse problems, and so forth, the agents can refer them to community-based programs to meet those basic urgent needs. Avoiding those kinds of returns does not rely on the effectiveness of any one program in reducing the offender's likelihood of violating parole. Thus, the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts.

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Consistent Decision Making

The Parole Division will continue to include the principles of consistent decision making in the parole agent training academy. The Parole Regions train all new unit supervisors in consistent decision making. As of May 1997, such training will be a basic part of the newly established training symposia for new supervisors.

Substance Abuse Treatment Networks

The Parolee Partnership Program and Prison Parole Network have demonstrated their effectiveness in reducing recidivism. They should be continued at their present level, but modified to increase their effectiveness in reducing recidivism, as funding allows.

Research on these programs suggest the following ways of improving their effectiveness:

- Increase the length of time parolees stay in treatment,
- Increase program completion rates, and
- Increase the proportion of participants who are employed at exit from the program.

Residential Multi-Service Centers

The Multi-Service Centers have demonstrated their ability to lower recidivism rates. They meet a strong need in urban centers, which is likely to increase. The Centers offer services similar to imprisonment for potentially high risk offenders who are not so dangerous as to require their being returned to prison. Recent evidence indicates they could be made more effective by increasing the average length of stay. It also seems likely that getting more people in jobs before they leave the Program would increase the Program's effectiveness in reducing returns to prison.

Non-Residential Multi-Service Centers

These centers were not established due to opposition by the residents of their planned location and failure of vendors to respond to several requests for bids. The Program shifted the funds to the computer-assisted literacy program, in pursuit of increased employment preparation for parolees:

Computer Assisted Learning Centers

The Computer Assisted Learning Centers provide tailored lessons to parolees based on computerized assessments of their learning deficiencies. The computer program is tailored to adult learning modes and offers features especially relevant to adult offenders. The students learn reading, writing, arithmetic, life skills and skills useful in getting jobs. The Program provides services to approximately 1.7 times the number of parolees envisioned in the BCP for PFP.

The typical parolee spends about 40 hours to accomplish approximately 60 lessons. They gain about two grade levels in reading in 13 hours on the computer; math takes 11 hours for a two-grade-level improvement. Seven hours on the computer increases reading level by one grade. For math, six hours produces a gain of one grade level. Parolees spent an average of 41 hours on the computer in addition to doing workbook exercises. As a result, on the average, they gained two grade levels in reading. Also, during the year ending February 1997, nearly 800 parolees obtained employment, either through their efforts or via referral by the learning center teacher to an EDD Job Specialist assigned to the parole office. A total of 42 parolees successfully obtained their GED, thereby significantly boosting their competitiveness in the job market.

For these, and other reasons given in the preceding parts of this report, the Computer-Assisted Learning Centers should be continued.

Assistance In Obtaining Employment

The employment assistance programs provided by P&CSD have helped a large number of parolees obtain jobs paying well above the minimum wage at a very modest cost of between \$350 and \$600 per placement. Most of the jobs are full time and many involve skilled work. Only about one-fourth were relatively low-paying "service" jobs. The average earnings (over \$6.00 per hour) were well above the minimum wage. The job specialists work closely with the parolees and their agents to assist the offenders in finding job opportunities, making effective applications, and doing well in job interviews. The specialists utilize and maintain their

resources for identifying jobs that are available to parolees. Depending upon funding, the P&CSD plans to continue providing assistance to parolees in obtaining employment.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, PPFP resulted in net savings over Program costs. The P&CSD improved its decision making in response to parole violations. The individual programs to help prevent parolee failures are operating effectively. The P&CSD will continue and improve all the programs, except for the non-residential multi-service centers, which were never established. In the last two calendar years, PPFP has saved over \$7.0 million dollars each year, in excess of Program costs. While service delivery components of the overall Program were effective in helping individual parolees avoid failure, by themselves those components were not cost effective. The Program produces savings in excess of costs by improving decision making and making resources available to parole agents and their supervisors so they can operate in a more cost effective manner while not increasing the risk to public safety. P&CSD expects these savings to continue--we believe terminating the Program would reduce the chances of parolee success and could result in increased returns to prison.