



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

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Department of Corrections

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June 1, 2023

The Honorable Terrance C. Cole
Secretary of Public Safety
Patrick Henry Building
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Behavioral Correction Program (BCP)

Dear Secretary Cole:

The 2009 General Assembly created a new sentencing option to allow judges to sentence inmates directly into the Department of Corrections' Substance Abuse Cognitive Therapeutic Community Treatment Program (CTC). Budget Item 390, Section J authorized the Department of Corrections in coordination with the Virginia Supreme Court to develop such a program. A meeting of Department of Corrections staff and staff of the Supreme Court was held and a model sentencing order developed. This is a status report on that program as required.

Under this sentencing option, the judge consults with probation and parole staff to determine eligibility and then sentences the inmate to a minimum of three years to serve. Once sentenced, the inmate will be processed through one of the Department of Corrections reception centers and then placed into the existing Substance Abuse Therapeutic Community programs at Indian Creek Correctional Center for males or Virginia Correctional Center for Women. The capacity of the program at Indian Creek is 979 and the program at Virginia Correctional Center for Women can accommodate 159 participants. Upon completion of the two year TC program, the sentencing judge can suspend the balance of the sentence and release the inmate on probation. These BCP sentenced inmates are housed with, and participate in the substance abuse program with other inmates who are sentenced through traditional sentencing.

Since the inception of the program in July 2009, 824 inmates sentenced under the BCP option have participated in the Therapeutic Community. As the program is 24 months in duration, inmates sentenced under the BCP option began to successfully complete the


program in December of 2011. Since that time, 659 have successfully completed the program and were released from the DOC. 229 of those have since been ordered returned to Department of Corrections' custody. Since 2009, a total of 155 inmates have been removed from the program due to behavioral or other issues. These inmates are typically reassigned to other prisons to serve out the balance of their sentence.

The Department continues to publicize this sentencing option to judges, Commonwealth's attorneys, defense attorneys and probation and parole staff. Numerous inquiries are being received regarding this option from judges, inmates, family members, attorneys and Commonwealth's attorneys.

It is again noted that a significant number of the inmates that were sentenced to BCP with the minimum 3 year sentence arrived at the program with less than the 24 months required to complete TC. This tends to remove the incentive of potential early release and indicates that a longer sentence is warranted to maximize the effectiveness of this sentencing option. We recommend that a minimum sentence of 4 years be required so that inmates have ample time to complete the TC requirements and still have sufficient time remaining to be suspended.

We feel inmates sentenced to this program with a possibility for early release will have a higher level of motivation to benefit from and complete the program and successful completion will continue to open bedspace at an increased rate. The Department will continue to operate the Behavioral Corrections Program, evaluate its effectiveness and report back annually.

Sincerely,



Harold W. Clarke

HWC/jep

Cc: Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Virginia