



# The PAPPC Journal

Volume 67  
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*A publication of The Pennsylvania Association on Probation, Parole and Corrections*



## A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE...

# *Transforming Community Corrections*

Registration  
materials now available!



The Pennsylvania Association on Probation, Parole and Corrections  
**89th**  
**Annual Training Institute**

**May 23rd – 25th, 2010**

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## *A MESSAGE from the P*RESIDENT

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*To the Membership of PAPPC:*

*As I am sure many of you are reminded in some way everyday, we are certainly in the midst of challenging economic times. It has become a standard of practice that we must do more with less. As these days of financial constraints continue, one of my primary expectations has been that PAPPC be empowered to deliver additional resources to our members within the many criminal justice specialty areas we represent across the Commonwealth.*

*Over the course of the past year, the leadership of PAPPC has worked to identify the strengths of our association as well as some of our limitations. We have recommended that the PAPPC organizational structure be augmented to become more efficient as well as begin to offer more to our members and identify exactly what being a member entails.*

*As I begin my departure from the PAPPC President role, I am confident knowing that this association is on the right track in meeting our members' needs and playing a vital role in advancing Pennsylvania's probation, parole, corrections, and victims services.*

*As a reminder, we are always looking for active members that could give a little of their time to one of the oldest associations of its' kind in Pennsylvania. If you are interested, please reach out to one of our Executive Committee Members.*

*I would like to thank each of you for the opportunity to serve you and I look forward to watching PAPPC becoming a greater voice for what we represent.*

*Very Truly Yours,*

*John Cookus*

*PAPPC President*



## PAPPC Journal *Editor's Notes*

*Can it really be that the first decade of the 21st Century has already come and gone? Perhaps I'm just experiencing the blur of a middle-aged time warp but it seems like just last year when the most pressing issue was "Y2K" and the greatest concern was whether our computers would be operable and maintain their storehouses of information. Fast forward 10 years and suddenly all of the angst caused by Y2K scares seems rather benign and almost inconsequential...what's the worse thing that could have happened, being forced to buy a new computer? Now it seems our challenges have escalated to an all new level with shrinking budgets, rising deficits, reductions in workforce, and an ever-increasing need for services. In many ways, it seems like we are living out the opening lines of Dickens' famous Tale of Two Cities, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." It doesn't take much analyzing to see how one might describe this past year as "the worst of times," but despite all of the current difficulties we are being faced with as criminal justice/corrections professionals, I think if we take the time to remember how far we have come during the past 10 years in the fields of probation, parole, and corrections, we can also conclude that we are living in "the best of times." Never has the PAPPC professional community been faced with so many daunting challenges but, at the same time, never have we been more equipped and capable of successfully meeting the assignments we are given each day.*

*As we enter a new decade, I think it is important to consider the many advances that have been made during the past ten years while anticipating and preparing for the next ten... overwhelming as it might seem at this moment. In an effort to assist us with a simultaneous glance back and look forward, this edition of The Journal features an article by Bill Burrell who skillfully communicates his thoughts on Transforming Community Corrections: An Urgent National Priority. Every PAPPC member who receives a copy of this publication will have an opportunity to hear more thoughts and perspective from Mr. Burrell, who is slated to present as opening speaker at this year's PAPPC Conference (May 23-25) at Seven Springs Resort. Hope to see you there.*

**Deon E. Roth,**

Editor, PAPPC Journal and  
Central Region Director, PA Board of Probation and Parole

## CONTACT US...

THE PAPPC JOURNAL is published by members of the Pennsylvania Association on Probation, Parole and Corrections. Articles, announcements and other newsworthy material of relevance to our membership, along with inquiries about advertising, may submitted for consideration to:

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REGISTRATION MATERIALS FOR THE 2010 ANNUAL TRAINING INSTITUTE have been mailed. The conference is May 23-25 at Seven Springs Mountain Resort. Please direct questions to:

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FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE

**pappc.org**



MAY 17-20, 2009

HARRISBURG EAST HOLIDAY INN

# 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Training Institute

The Pennsylvania Association on Probation, Parole and Corrections hosted its 88th Training Institute in Harrisburg May 17-20, 2009. The theme for the institute was *Achieving Success and Identifying Solutions: Making Progress*. Following musical performances by Bill Bloom, and Welcome Remarks from the Honorable Bruce F. Bratton (Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas), Clay Yeager presented a dynamic and informative opening Plenary Session, *Slow the Flow: The Power of Prevention and People to Reduce Crime in America*. Dr. Ron Sharp further reinforced this year's theme and inspired participants with his Closing Session presentation, *Human Service: The Science of Saving Lives*.



*More than two hundred registrants had an opportunity to participate in a variety of thirty-one workshops, including an Introduction to Occupational Spanish seminar on Sunday.*

## Silent Auction

BENEFITS LOCAL AGENCIES

Proceeds from the Silent Auction benefitted Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Greater Harrisburg (*top*) and New Beginnings Youth and Adult Services (*bottom*), also of Harrisburg. A check in the amount of \$500 was presented to each agency.



Plenary Session:  
Clay Yeager



Closing Remarks:  
Dr. Ron Sharp



Incoming President:  
John Cook

Please plan to donate an item for the 2010 Silent Auction at Seven Springs in May! For more information, contact: Kristin L. Sayers, 717-214-8986 or at [krsayers@state.pa.us](mailto:krsayers@state.pa.us).

# 2009 *Annual Awards Program*

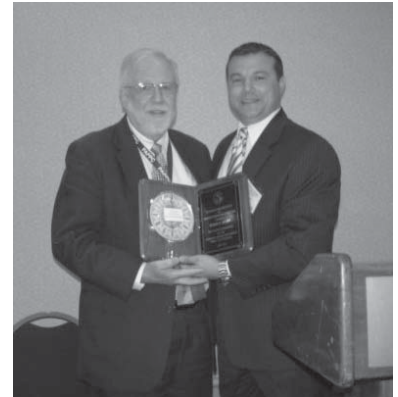
MAY 19, 2010  
HARRISBURG EAST  
HOLIDAY INN



**ADULT PROBATION/PAROLE  
PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**  
**Joseph Gillespie**  
*presented by Thomas Costa (l)*



**ADULT CORRECTIONS  
PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**  
**Kristin Sayers**  
*presented by John Cookus (r)*



**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**  
**ROBERT KELSEY**  
*is honored by  
President John Cookus (r)*



**JUVENILE JUSTICE  
PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**  
**Thomas J. Hughes**  
*presented by John Cookus (r)*



**JUVENILE CORRECTIONS  
PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR**  
**Stephen Masciantonio**  
*(photo not available)*



**PBPP EASTERN DIRECTOR**  
**THOMAS N. COSTA**  
*receives Recognition Award from  
PBPP Executive Director John Tuttle (r)*

PAPPC is now accepting nominations for its 2010 Annual Awards Program. You are encouraged to recognize deserving colleagues through this process. For information, contact Tonuia Smith, Awards Committee Chair, at (724) 850-4711; tsmith@co.westmoreland.pa.us. **The deadline for submission is April 23, 2010.**

# Transforming Community Corrections: An Urgent National Priority

by William D. Burrell\*

Reprinted with permission, from the *Community Corrections Report*, November/December 2009.

The decades-long trend of increasing prison populations and relentless prison construction in the United States seems finally to have lost its head of steam. This is happening as the result of several social and political trends that are affecting the states' policy decisions regarding corrections. Some of these decisions are reasoned and deliberate, but others are more rushed and reflexive reactions to powerful external events. In both cases, the result has been the shifting of some portion of the overall correctional population from prisons to community supervision: probation, parole, or some other form of post-prison supervision.

The most recent and catastrophic driver of correctional policy is the financial crisis which has been crippling the states, slashing revenues, and forcing difficult choices about state spending. Some states have chosen to release inmates from prison prior to completion of their sentence in numbers large enough to close entire prisons (Sullivan, 2009). These inmates are being released to the community, usually to the supervision of probation or parole officers. In the most extreme example, California is being forced by the federal courts to release 40,000 inmates from prison to the community to bring the state's prison population to a constitutionally acceptable level. **Coleman v. Schwarzenegger et al.**, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 67943, Aug. 4, 2009. (For more information, see [www.cdcr.ca.gov/news/docs/OrderonEvidObjs.pdf](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/news/docs/OrderonEvidObjs.pdf).)

Some states have been looking at their correctional policy for some time, pre-dating the present financial crisis. These states have also been driven by financial concerns but have taken a more deliber-

ate approach. These states saw that the continual growth of the corrections budget was consuming a greater share of state funds than almost any other government function and there was no end in sight. In addition, the correctional system seemed unable to deliver public safety results that would justify the huge expenditures. Many of these states made policy changes, including reforming probation and parole revocation practices, investing in substance abuse and other behavioral treatment programs, and revising sentencing and parole release practices. The result has been a decrease in reliance on incarceration and a shift of a portion of the inmate population to community supervision.

These policy shifts, both the considered and deliberate, as well as the more reactive and rushed, come on top of another long-term trend that is shifting the focus of correctional control and supervision. The huge build-up of prison populations in the 1980s and 1990s has begun to produce the inevitable consequence of growing prison populations: a growing number of prisoners being released. Even the longest of prison terms come to an end, either through discretionary or mandatory parole release or expiration of sentence. The result is the statistic that can be credited with giving birth to the reentry movement: 600,000 prisoners would be released from state and federal prisons every year starting around the turn of the millennium and continuing (and growing) for the foreseeable future.

The cumulative impact of all of these factors and trends is a significant increase in the number of offenders being released to community supervision, a development that places a greater burden on an already overcrowded and under-resourced probation and parole system. Community supervision agencies have for years been responsible for the majority of offenders,

yet they receive a fraction of the financial resources allotted to corrections. Probation and parole agencies supervise 70% of the adults under correctional supervision, some 5.1 million persons (Glaze & Bonczar, 2008). Despite being responsible for the majority of offenders, they receive just 12% of the funding (Pew Center on the States, 2009).

While there are fundamental differences between running community corrections and running a prison (24/7 operations and related staffing requirements, security, food, and medical care) that justify increased costs for prisons, the disparity in funding contributes to and exacerbates the weaknesses of community corrections. Large caseloads, lack of treatment resources (Taxman, 2008), inadequate to nonexistent technology—all contribute to the inability of probation and parole to effectively supervise those offenders under their jurisdiction. With the shift of a greater share of the correctional population to community corrections, we run the danger of placing even greater pressure on a system that is already under extreme stress.

## A Cautionary Tale

As we consider this dilemma, we should be reminded that the United States went through a similar process a half century or so ago, and we should learn from that experience. In the 1950s, there were some half million people confined to large psychiatric hospitals because their behavior posed a danger to themselves or others. Around that time, new psychotropic drugs were developed that could stabilize their patients' symptoms to the point that they could be released into the community. A large and potent social movement pushed for "deinstitutionalization" of these patients, shifting

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them from confinement in large institutions to a network of small group homes and residences in the community. There, patients could live and work, monitored by staff that would ensure that they took their medication and help them to adjust to life in the community. This was a great concept, but the second part of the model—the community residences—were never in the numbers that were needed. Yet the patients were given their medications and released to the community. Without a place to live and supervision to ensure compliance with medication, many of these mentally ill persons struggled. They gravitated to boarding houses and single-room occupancy hotels, went on public assistance, and often became involved in the criminal justice system.

The large-scale release of inmates from prisons could replicate the deinstitutionalization experience, overwhelming community supervision agencies and depriving the offenders of the guidance and assistance that they need to make a successful adjustment to life in the community. Many of the mentally ill suffered and struggled anonymously in the shadows, joining the ranks of the homeless and living on the margins of society. While some became involved with the criminal justice system, many of their offenses were minor and were more disruptive of public order than truly dangerous to the public.

The released offender population poses a substantively different and greater risk to the public. These are individuals who have violated the law frequently enough and at a level that warranted incarceration, often for lengthy terms. They have repeatedly demonstrated their willingness to violate the law and injure others in pursuit of their goals. Releasing them in large numbers without ensuring that there is sufficient supervision in the community poses an unwarranted risk to public safety.

I do not mean to suggest that the shift away from mass incarceration should be halted or reversed. Just as the oppressive conditions in mental hospitals compelled legislators, policy makers, patient advocates, and ordinary citizens to demand that the patients be released and those

facilities be closed, the arguments against mass incarceration are equally compelling. As a policy, mass incarceration is prohibitively costly; horribly destructive of individuals, families, and communities; and remarkably ineffective at what is ostensibly its core purpose: the prevention of crime (Clear, 2007).

What this dilemma does suggest, very compellingly, is that we must undertake a broad initiative to strengthen and build the capacity of probation and parole agencies to carry out their core mission: supervision of offenders in the community. It is long past time to put our collective resources behind community corrections to enable it to achieve the promise and potential that so many have identified. We need to reverse the situation characterizing community corrections in the report from the Pew Center on the States: “Big promise, little support.” The report goes on to state: “If policy-makers want...results, they will have to invest in the overburdened system of community corrections” (Pew Center on the States, 2009).

## What Should Be Done?

It is easy to say that we need to strengthen community corrections, but it is a challenge to identify concisely what needs to be done, and still quite another matter to determine how these goals can be accomplished. It is best to handle the easier task first: determining what needs to be done.

The *capacity* of the community corrections system to provide effective supervision of offenders has to be increased across the country, and in some jurisdictions, by a substantial amount. Building that capacity requires focusing on the issue of probation and parole staff.

The first priority is to increase the number of probation and parole officers (PPOs). While this recommendation sounds like the same old song that has been sung for years, even decades, there is no getting around the fact that most probation and parole agencies are understaffed. While accurate caseload statistics are not available on a national level, one

authority notes that average caseloads exceed 130 (Taxman, 2008). A cursory review of state and local agency reports reveals that average caseloads routinely exceed, often by significant amounts, those recommended by the American Probation and Parole Association (Burrell, 2007).

The reality of probation and parole is that effective supervision is “human capital intensive,” meaning that it requires a significant investment of human capital (PPO time, knowledge, skills, and resources) if it is to be done well. We have no probation machine or parole drug that will accomplish the goal of supervision. Our PPOs are the “technology” of supervision, and there must be enough of them, with caseloads small enough to provide effective supervision.

A great deal of hope has been placed in the various electronic monitoring technologies that are increasingly being adopted, often as the result of legislative mandates. In his recent book, Mark Kleiman (2009) recommends greater utilization of global positioning satellite (GPS) monitoring for probationers and parolees. While such technology can prove useful, it often exacerbates the workload pressures on PPOs, who now also have to monitor and respond to information provided by these systems, which monitor offenders 24/7. Information on offenders’ whereabouts is of little use if the PPO does not have the time or resources to use it. Like all technology available to probation and parole, GPS is simply a tool that must be effectively integrated into the workload of the PPO.

The second area of need is to increase the capacity of the system to provide high-quality treatment for the offender population. Treatment needs include drug and alcohol treatment, sex offender treatment, batterer intervention for domestic violence, and a variety of other behavioral interventions to address the criminogenic disorders of offenders. At present, only a fraction of the treatment need is being met. A national survey revealed that there is currently treatment capacity to handle less than 10% of those offenders needing substance abuse treatment (Taxman,



2008). Since substance abuse treatment is the most commonly provided service, the treatment needs of other offender groups are drastically under-addressed.

Lest this sound like another demand for resources to fix all the ills of the system, it is important to note that the community corrections system has a big role to play in building capacity by better utilizing its existing staff—even before any new staff might be added. Building on evidence-based practices (Bogue et al., 2004), the risk/need/responsivity model (Andrews & Bonta, 2006), and other research, there are several steps that must be taken:

1. *Remove the low-risk offenders from active supervision, thereby reducing caseloads.* There are a variety of strategies and technologies that can be used to provide accountability for these low-risk offenders without consuming great amounts of expensive and scarce PPO time. Incorporating these tools will quickly and, in many agencies, significantly reduce the supervision caseloads.
2. *Supervise the remaining moderate- and high-risk offenders with proven strategies and techniques.* Doing so includes addressing criminogenic factors and using cognitive behavioral interventions and supervision tactics.
3. *Reduce revocations for technical violations of probation and parole.* Revocations comprise a high percentage of new prison admissions, and many of these could be avoided with the use of straightforward and inexpensive innovations like sanctioning guidelines (Martin et al., 2009) and restructured enforcement strategies (National Institute of Justice, 2008).

## How Can We Do this?

Implementing these three changes in the community supervision agencies of the United States is a daunting task. The primary reason is that community corrections is a highly fragmented and decentralized system in the United States. Unlike the United Kingdom, we do not

have a national probation service that covers the entire country. Instead, we have a huge amalgamation of federal, state, county, municipal, and tribal agencies. Some are located in the executive branch, others in the judiciary. In some

and other specialty courts. In all three instances, the federal government decided that change in criminal justice policies and practices was needed, and the government intervened to initiate the change and provide funding to support imple-

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## *A cursory review of state and local agency reports reveals that average caseloads routinely exceed those recommended by the American Probation and Parole Association.*

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jurisdictions, probation and parole are combined in one agency; in others, they are separate. Adult and juvenile services are usually housed in separate agencies. To this list of government agencies, we must also add private probation services, some of which are nonprofit and others for profit. The result is hundreds of agencies that provide probation and parole services, under the jurisdiction of a wide variety of administrative supervision and funding arrangements.

Given this fragmentation, it should be clear why it is so difficult to conceive of and organize a national effort to transform community supervision. Who would take this on? What agency at what level of government would be able to accomplish this?

It seems clear to me that a federal initiative is the most effective and perhaps the only way to proceed. The federal government, through the Department of Justice, has the influence and can access the resources needed to make such a transformative effort happen.

While some may argue that crime and criminal justice are primarily state and local issues, there have been at least three notable federal initiatives that have targeted state and local criminal justice systems in recent years. These include the COPS office and 100,000 Police Officers initiative; the Violent Offender Truth in Sentencing program, which provided money for prison construction in return for harsher sentencing laws; and finally, the drug courts office, which has helped to fund and guide the expansion of drug

mentation. It is interesting to note that these three initiatives addressed funding for police, courts, and institutional corrections. Is it not time for community corrections to be the focus of such a national effort?

### Reinvestment and Reallocation

It is certainly an inopportune time to be speaking about large investments of new federal money in any endeavor, even one as deserving as community corrections. The good news is that a community corrections transformation initiative need not require huge investments of new federal or even state dollars. The groundbreaking work of several states, with the assistance of the Council on State Governments, is showing how correctional policies and practices can be realigned to significantly reduce the demand for prison beds and redirect a portion of the cost savings toward strengthening community corrections. (For more information, see <http://www.justicereinvestment.org>.)

The potential of such an approach can be seen in the cost data presented in the Pew Center on the States' (2009) "One in 31" report. The average cost of a day in prison is more than \$75. The average cost of a day of parole supervision is about \$7.50, one tenth that of prison (Pew Center on the States, 2009). If reformed probation and parole practices could substantially reduce revocations and sentences to prison, the savings would be significant. If just one third of those savings (\$25 per day) could be redirected

to probation and parole to bolster staffing, upgrade technology, and increase the availability of quality treatment services, the impact would be enormous. The remaining two thirds of the prison savings could be used by the state to address other critical needs.

These reinvested funds would serve as a substantial “down payment” on the capacity-building efforts of community corrections. It will be necessary to look at other means of increasing and sustaining the funding base of community corrections, however, if the transformation is to be successful.

## Research and Development: A Critical Need and a Natural Federal Role

While the operational enhancements for community corrections could initially be largely funded through prison cost savings, there is an area where the federal government is well suited to play a major role. The field of community corrections needs a significant investment in *research and development* to support its transformation and continuing improvement. The

opment work has advanced the knowledge and practice in addiction treatment exponentially and should serve as a model for providing assistance to community corrections for capacity-building efforts.

The agenda for a community corrections research and development program should focus on four areas:

1. *Knowledge about effective supervision and intervention practices.* While the “what works”/evidence-based practices literature is compelling, there needs to be greater awareness and understanding of it, and the benefits that can result from it. There is also more work needed in under-researched areas, such as sex offenders, domestic violence, and gangs.
2. *Development of detailed program models that practitioners can pick up and use to improve their operations.* The Treatment Improvement Protocols (TIPS) and Technical Assistance Publication Series (TAPS) produced by the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (<http://csat.samhsa.gov/publications.aspx>) are excellent examples of guides to assist practitioners in putting research into practice.
3. *Technology transfer efforts to assist agencies and managers in implementing the organizational changes that are required to improve practices and achieve better results.* Implementation of models like evidence-based practices is a significant and daunting challenge, one that requires significant assistance and guidance from researchers and experienced practitioners who have struggled with the challenges of implementation and succeeded.
4. *Development and integration of “hard” technology into operations.* The National Law Enforcement and Technology Center has done an excellent job of advancing the field’s knowledge of technology and effective application

in practice, but more is needed, including practitioner education, integration, evaluation, and research and development.

## A Partnership for the Future

Accomplishing this transformation of probation and parole will require multiple partners if it is to succeed. The federal government can use the bully pulpit to raise awareness of the issues and the need for transformation and can provide the much-needed support in research and development, education and training, technology transfer support, and funding. That federal investment must be matched by equal or greater commitments at the state level to provide incentives to reduce probation and parole revocations for technical violations. Agencies should work to keep as many of those offenders in the community as is appropriate and prudent. With that reduced number of new admissions to state prisons, a portion of the cost savings must be reallocated to probation and parole to increase their supervision and treatment capacity. Those reallocated savings should be supplemented on a long-term basis by a more stable funding mechanism. Finally, probation and parole agencies must take the steps noted above to ensure that they are making the best use of the staff they have by implementing evidence-based supervision policies and practices.

The recent experience in Arizona demonstrates how such an approach might work at the state and local level. A portion of the savings from the state corrections budget that result from reduced probation revocations are reallocated to the county probation budget for use in improving services and programs. The county will then be required to reinvest this supplemental funding in victim services, substance abuse treatment, and strategies to improve community supervision and reduce recidivism (Pew Center on the States, 2008).

For this type of initiative to be replicated in other states, strong leadership at the federal and state levels is required. This is the type of situation where the

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*The average cost of a day of parole supervision is about \$7.50, one tenth that of prison*

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current level of federal investment in this area is paltry, especially when one considers the scope of the responsibility of community corrections for the safety of our fellow citizens and our communities.

An excellent example of federal involvement in research and development can be found literally “right next door” to community corrections, in the substance abuse field. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) and its related agencies invest substantial sums of money in research to understand addiction and treatment. They also produce both program models to guide practice and technology transfer materials to assist with program implementation and organizational change. This federally funded research and devel-

*The transformation of community supervision of offenders should be a priority, even if we were not facing the prison release crisis.*

federal Department of Justice can play a unique and important role. Just as the department advocated for and won funding to support initiatives to strengthen police, courts and institutional corrections in recent years, it could—and should—do the same for community corrections.

It should be obvious that everyone with a stake in the effectiveness of community corrections must step up to the plate and play an active role in this transformation. Beyond the federal government, governors, legislators, and state policy makers must take up the cause. Needless to say, every probation and parole agency must be at the table as well, along with their many justice system partners. Professional organizations, advocacy groups, and foundations must also join to provide their expertise, experience, and resources. The opportunity to transform community supervision of offenders should be a priority, even if we were not facing the prison release crisis. One third of offenders arrested in the 75 largest urban counties were under probation, parole, or pre-

trial supervision when arrested (Cohen & Reaves, 2006). Clearly, the effectiveness of community supervision has significant implications for community safety. Given the large-scale release of inmates to the community, the transformation of community corrections should become a top national and local priority.

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PAPPC  
*Mission Statement*

THE MISSION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION ON PROBATION, PAROLE AND CORRECTIONS (PAPPC) SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES BEST PRACTICE METHODS AND PROFESSIONALISM IN THE FIELD OF JUVENILE AND ADULT PROBATION, PAROLE, CORRECTIONS, INSTITUTIONAL CARE AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION.

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION ON PROBATION, PAROLE, AND CORRECTIONS

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2009-2010

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