

For Immediate Release
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Indiana Department of Correction Launches First Non-Prison-based Therapeutic Community

Indianapolis, IN – In an effort to bring a proven evidence-based practice to the local level, the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC), in partnership with officials at the Starke County Jail, has launched the state's first non-prison-based therapeutic community (TC) for IDOC offenders. Currently, Purposeful Incarceration sentence requires an offender to participate in an intense therapeutic community substance treatment model and, as a reward, receive a review for modification of sentence of up to five years upon completion. In the new proposal, offenders will receive treatment closer to home, as opposed to being housed in a traditional prison setting.

"I'm excited about the Therapeutic Community Program and its potential to address an ongoing drug problem we face right here in our backyard and across the state," said Starke County Sheriff Bill Dulin, who oversees the jail. "It's thrilling to be partnering with the Department of Correction."

The Therapeutic Community program will be a minimum of 8 months of intensive therapy living in a recovery environment and is intended for those most severely addicted. The ultimate goal is to improve family structure and dynamics and decrease criminal behavior in our communities through recovery. The idea first began after conversations with Circuit Judge Kim Hall and other Starke County officials and was later endorsed by the Governor's Task Force on Drug Enforcement, Treatment and Prevention.

"TC is a very effective drug treatment program," said Judge Hall. "Now, for the first time, I won't have to sentence those convicted of drug offenses to prison just so that they can receive this treatment. And, keeping them closer to their families has proven to be more effective in achieving their goal of maintaining a clean lifestyle when they are released."

As more low-level offenders return to their communities under the revised criminal code, it is essential that tools are available to criminal justice agencies in local jurisdictions. This program will allow county jails to see how a therapeutic setting can be established.

"Encouraging an offender to seek treatment and maintain sobriety with the promise of a modification review should help reduce recidivism for drug and alcohol abusers," said Julie Lanham, Deputy Commissioner of Re-entry.

IDOC will also implement a Vivitrol pilot program in Starke County for those who were severely addicted to opiates such as heroin or alcohol. Vivitrol, an opiate-blocker with no addictive potential, will be administered via monthly injections. This proven treatment works by reducing cravings for opiates and alcohol and the associated high from its use. In this case, participants will receive one shot prior to their release and, along with regular drug testing, continue their post-release treatment within their community. IDOC will also help eligible offenders enroll in the Indiana Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP 2.0) upon release. The HIP 2.0 program provides coverage for injections and other mental health services. Through successful negotiation with the federal government, Governor Mike Pence secured approval for the HIP 2.0 program, which expands the original HIP program to all non-disabled adults in Indiana earning below 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

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