Federal Probation

SEPTEMBER 1990

Federal Probation is formatted and typeset by the Administrative Office's electronic publishing system (Ronald Jackson, electronic publishing editor, Printing, Mail, and Records Management Branch).

Federal Probation (ISSN 0014-9128) is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December. All aspects of corrections and criminal justice come within. the fields of interest of *Federal Probation*. The journal wishes to share with its readers all constructively worthwhile points of view and welcomes the contributions of persons—including those from Federal, state, and local organizations, institutions, and agencies—who work with or study juvenile and adult offenders. Authors are invited to submit articles describing experience or significant findings related to the prevention and control of delinquency and crime.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to the editor at the address below.

FEDERAL PROBATION
Administrative Office of the United States Courts
Washington, DC 20544

Telephone: (202)633-6228

Second-Class Postage Paid at Washington, DC
Publication Number: USPS 356-210

Federal Probation

A JOURNAL OF CORRECTIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

Published by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts

VOLUME LIV SEPTEMBER 1990 NUMBER 3

This Issue in Brief

Career Issues for Probation Officers.—Careers offer unique strains and frustrations. This is so for the work of the physician, the teacher—and the probation officer. While a probation officer's work can be interesting and rewarding, it presents a unique set of challenges. The hybrid role of the probation officer—which requires juggling investigative/enforcement tasks with counseling responsibilities—may cause conflict. Author Darrell K. Mills identifies six issues that the probation officer may face during a career. These issues, which have the potential to adversely affect job performance and motivation, require the officer's accommodation or resolution. The author provides strategies for coping with these issues.

Community Service Orders in Federal Probation: Perceptions of Probationers and Host Agencies.—To date, efforts to evaluate community service programs have focused on the views of the operators of these programs. An important element in program evaluation—the offenders' perspective—has been overlooked. Authors G. Frederick Allen and Harvey Treger used the theoretical perspectives of rehabilitation, deterrence, desert, and the justice model as the framework for a semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire for reviewing perceptions. The authors interviewed a sample of 73 probationers and program operators in 38 cooperating agencies. Findings revealed that community service is perceived by probationers and host agency operators as primarily a rehabilitative sanction rather than as the punishment that the courts may have intended.

The Presentence Investigation Report: An Old Saw With New Teeth.—The presentence investigation report has been tradition-bound in purpose and content almost from its inception well over 100 years ago. Designed to facilitate sentencing decision-making, it has also become utilitarian for a host of secondary users. After an historical review of the construction of the presentence investigation report, authors Alvin W. Cohn and Michael M. Ferriter propose a new PSI model. It is one which facilitates primary and secondary decision-making, reduces labor intensity, and eliminates any debate over long versus short forms. The authors discuss the use of the model in Montana probation and assess its applicability and impact in criminal justice administration.

Considering Victim Impact—The Role of Probation.—Since its inception in a Fresno, California probation department in 1974, the victim

CONTENTS

The Training of Correctional Officers for Environmental Health Services

BY BAILUS WALKER, JR., Ph.D., MPH AND
SANFORD M. BROWN, Ph.D., MPH*

FEW ASPECTS of community health have been subject to more intense debate over the past several years than environmental conditions in the nation's jails and prisons. Public demand for stricter sentences, increased mandatory sentencing, and demographic change have enlarged more "prison-prone age" groups in society. Consequently, prisons are filled above capacity, leading to more lawsuits to correct substandard conditions of confinement and to a greater demand for environmental risk assessment and risk management within correctional institutions.[1] In response, numerous Federal and state courts have ordered prison officials to develop comprehensive environmental health and safety programs with particular emphasis on food sanitation, insect and rodent control, water supply and waste water disposal, solid waste management, lighting, ventilation, heating and fire safety, preventive maintenance, and housekeeping services.

For example, between 1986 and 1988, 27 percent or 166 of the jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations were under court order to improve one or more of the following conditions of confinement: (a) crowded living conditions, (b) food service sanitation, and (c) fire hazards and related housekeeping and maintenance problems. In almost every state and the District of Columbia, prison officials are also under court order to correct an even larger number of substandard conditions.[2]

In the recent past, these areas of responsibility have been delegated to correctional officers whose primary duties, interests, and training lie elsewhere. State and local public health agencies have also attempted to provide limited environmental health services to correctional authorities directed primarily at specific sanitary code requirements.

These inspections and related assessment activities have been the strongest aspects of environmental health risk reduction within correctional facilities. But as the community-at-large has demanded more attention to environmental hazards (e.g., indoor and ambient air pollution, toxic substances in food, water, and workplaces, liquid and solid waste), many public health departments have had to shift resources away from jails and prisons.

Moreover, in numerous jurisdictions, the environmental health sanitarian—population ratio lags behind other communities. Even within states, there are wide differences in the distribution of environmental health personnel, with wealthier areas proportionately better supplied than the urban core. In addition to problems of numerical maldistribution, there is increasing recognition that the mix of environmental health manpower is becoming unbalanced with relatively too few "generalists" to carry out routine monitoring and surveillance activities at the level presently required by correctional institutions. At the same time, the basic environmental needs of an expanding at-risk prison population indicate that more intensive services are required. Indeed, in many of today's correctional facilities, the scope of environmental health issues, including problems of occupational health in prison industries, pest control problems, the cost of maintenance and housekeeping supplies, and a broad range of other determinants of health and illness, are such that a full-time environmental health staff is a virtual necessity.

In this report, we describe an initial effort of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico to meet its own need for environmental health services.

Health Needs in Corrections

Before describing the training program, it is well to review briefly environmental health needs of contemporary correctional facilities. Contributing to this need are the numbers of prisoners under the jurisdiction of Federal and state correctional authorities. At year-end 1988, a record 627,402 were in some type of correctional facility. The states and the District of Columbia added

*Dr. Walker is dean, College of Public Health, University of Oklahoma, Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City. Dr. Brown is professor of environmental sciences and associate dean, College of Health and Social Work, California State University at Fresno. Both are consultants to the Federal District Court for the District of Puerto Rico.

41,399 prisoners, the Federal system, 1,628. The increase in 1988 alone brought total growth in prison population since 1980 to 297,581, an increase of approximately 90 percent in the 8-year period.[3] Correctional institutions also serve as a workplace for a large segment of the general population. In 1988, correctional employees numbered nearly 200,000. Almost 100,000 of these employees performed custody/security functions.[4]

The magnitude of the physical plant which has been provided to serve this population further illustrates the continuing need for environmental health and safety services. Over 5,300 American correctional facilities were identified in a national survey by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.[5] For these facilities, the estimated value of the buildings that housed living quarters, medical care, recreational sites, classrooms, industrial operations, food service, laundry operations, barber and beauty services, and a whole range of other activities amounts to billions of dollars. Also significant are the expanding physical plants that will be required to accommodate the additional population if effective alternatives to incarceration are fully developed (e.g., house arrest, community service sentences, intensive supervision programs).

Major construction programs are already under way in many states and at the Federal level where the Bureau of Prisons will double the number of correctional facilities by the turn of the century at a cost of billions of dollars.

Today, the increase in the prison population is exceeding the design capacity—that number of inmates which planners or architects intended for the facilities. Thus, ventilation systems, food service, water supply and waste water disposal equipment, solid waste collection and disposal programs, and related housekeeping services are overtaxed, and malfunctions are frequent.

Moreover, prisoners who work in prison industries are confronted not only with toxic exposure due to widespread use of solvents but they also encounter agricultural chemicals used in prison farming centers. Jails and prisons present all of the potential risks of physical injuries— both intentional and unintentional—that would be found in any community, and they offer a challenge to correctional authorities to coordinate the medical care of injured inmates with injury prevention programs.

As with other programs in environmental health, injury prevention is **not** limited to hazards to prisoners but obviously is also a valuable service to correctional employees. Prevention of injuries among these workers is important not only as a public health measure but also important to administrators because of the cost of such injuries. Our comparison of the accident experience at two state prisons with the national experience in the same job shows a savings to the two large prisons—both with comprehensive prevention programs—in worker's compensation costs of approximately $350,000.[6]

When we review environmental health problems of jails and prisons with correctional authorities and public health officials, it is not unusual for them to express the opinion that these problems are limited to a few larger correctional systems. Such an assumption is incorrect. Nearly two out of three confinement facilities house fewer than 500 inmates. About one in nine confinement facilities house 1,000 or more inmates. About one in five house between 500 and 999 inmates.[7] This relatively large number of "small" jails and prisons have need for the basic and traditional environmental health services such as food sanitation, supervision of housekeeping and maintenance, routine surveillance of water supply, plumbing, solid and liquid waste disposal.

The Correctional System in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico, an island of 3.2 million inhabitants, has a correctional system that includes 22 jails and prisons ranging in design capacity from 20 to 1,200 inmates. Nine of these institutions were constructed between 1970 and 1988. Others are several decades to almost a century old. They are self-contained units providing medical care, laundry services, limited recreational facilities, food service, and industrial activities (e.g., woodworking) in several prisons. Since 1980, the number of sentenced inmates per 100,000 residents has risen nearly 76 percent from 139 to 244.

A lawsuit filed in late 1979 alleging substandard conditions and "cruel and unusual punishment" resulted in a Federal court order directing correctional authorities to develop and implemented plans, programs, and services to improve medical services, environmental sanitation, and maintenance of the physical plants. Efforts are under way to comply with this judicial directive.

Needs Assessment

Our assessment of the conditions in Puerto Rico's correctional facilities and a review of findings of the court and of specific provisions of the court order indicated that the initial need was for individuals at each institution with a practical knowledge of basic environmental health concepts,

principles, methods, and techniques. The system needed trained persons who could collect and record adequate data on existing environmental sanitation conditions, and prioritize and initiate corrective actions on health hazards that are fully covered by written guidelines or standards. Such workers also needed social, environmental, and ethnic qualities of the majority population of the community and, in more specific terms, a sharing of verbal and non-verbal language with prison officials and residents of the correctional institution.

A further analysis of the demographics and "ecology" of the system and of the concerns of the Federal District Court for the District of Puerto Rico pointed to the need for a technician who would be able to establish a system for keeping records of results achieved and for planning future activities for the prevention of environmentally provoked diseases and dysfunctions among inmates and staff. In some U.S. agencies or organizations, this individual is classified as a "health inspector," "environmental health aide," or "environmental health technician." In the Puerto Rico correctional system, this person is designated "institutional sanitation officer" or ISO.

It was our view that this "generalist," with the cooperation and technical assistance of the Puerto Rico Department of Health, local universities, and other commonwealth and U.S. governmental agencies on the island, could begin to develop in each institution a basic environmental health and housekeeping program by performing routine and clearly prescribed program tasks.

Program and Goals

It is in this setting that we developed for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico a program to train correctional officers in the basic principles of environmental health. The program's goals were (a) to teach pre-selected correctional officers the basic principles of environmental health and (b) to train course participants to conduct environmental health audits and implement measures to prevent the transmission of infectious disease and other health hazards. Nineteen officers were trained.

Typically, the course, presented between December 1988 and June 1989, began with a lecture-information format supplemented by audio/visual aids and moved to a question-and-answer period. All lectures were presented by graduate environmental health specialists. The course was 4 to 6 hours a day for 2 weeks, including field work in which participants gained direct experience in conducting a supervised environmental audit and in prescribing corrective actions for deficiencies observed.

Topics covered included:

1. *Control of Communicable Diseases*
   - — water and food-borne diseases;
   - — insect-borne diseases;
   - — airborne diseases related to crowding.
2. *Water Supply and Waste Water*
   - — plumbing as an element of housing;
   - — potential hazards of the plumbing system.
3. *Food Protection*
   - — role of food service personnel;
   - — food storage and service;
   - — temperature control;
   - — food service facilities and equipment;
   - — cleaning and maintenance schedules.
4. *Solid Waste Management*
   - — collection, storage, disposal.
5. *Vectors of Disease*
   - — general housekeeping practice;
   - — pesticide use;
   - — environmental controls.
6. *Fire Safety*
   - — fire terminology;
   - — fire theory;
   - — environmental aspects of fire prevention and control;
   - — personnel aspects of fire prevention and control.
7. *Housekeeping Practices*
   - — scheduling;
   - — quality control;
   - — purchasing of supplies and equipment.
8. *Administration*
   - — record keeping;
   - — environmental trends analysis;
   - — setting priorities.

In developing this curriculum, it became clear that in correctional institutions of all levels of size and environmental complexity, the person carrying out the functions of planning and managing an environmental health program needs more than the normal foundations of training in sanitary and environmental health sciences. Certainly, the knowledge of the well-established foundation provided by the eight areas outlined above serves as a good background. However, the institutional sanitation officer must have knowledge of institutional administration, organization of state and local correctional systems, and security procedures. Fortunately, the participants in this training program already had an understanding of the broader dimensions of correctional administration and organization so it was not necessary to devote time to this topic.

Some Considerations

As the course progressed, a number of considerations for evaluating outcomes became evident:

- Individual differences, not chronological age, limit the learning ability of adults.
- Learning is more effective when it takes place in a supportive environment; a non-supportive environment is stressful, and stress is a major block to learning.
- Practice and feedback provides the individual with positive reinforcement and are important to the learning process.
- Past educational experience and self-perception affects the individual's motivation, both positively and negatively.

Moreover, the basic characteristics of the generic "adult learner" also apply to correctional officers. Trainers and educators developing short-term environmental health education programs will want to better understand the variables that govern an adult's life in a particular work setting and the complex and multifaceted characteristics of adult learning. The immediacy of the educational need and the urgency of the situation—which in the present case was a court order—do not lend themselves to taking time for this interpretative process. Clearly, when program development concerns itself solely with content and logistics, the one consideration that might make the difference between a successful program—attention to human needs—is often given such low priority that its effects are negligible.

A Shared Responsibility

The question-and-answer periods of the course also revealed concerns about the stature and the authority of the institutional sanitation officer. We recommended to the correctional authorities that the ISO function administratively in a staff capacity—as the eyes, ears, and, in some cases, the conscience of the administrator, warden, or superintendent of the institution. The ISO should have direct access to the administrator and to the chiefs of all correctional services, we emphasized.

No matter what the size of the organization devoted to this problem, its sole responsibility must be the integrity of the institution's environment, and this must be recognized to the end that the work of the institutional sanitation officer will have the attention and respect of the correctional staff.

But reducing the risk of environmental insults cannot be confined solely to the institutional sanitation officer, it must be carried out with an enlightened and conscious effort by every member of the correctional staff—food service supervisor, maintenance director, and related personnel.

Indeed, overall improvement in environmental conditions can be gained only if all correctional administrators including the wardens or superintendents and their staffs are aware of problems of environmental health—that they understand how water supply systems, plumbing facilities, and ventilation systems are intended to be operated. They must also know enough to recognize when a system—critical to the health of inmates and staff—is not operating properly and initiate the necessary maintenance or repair request. Thus, we plan to implement regular seminars, meetings, and formal lectures to keep the Puerto Rico correctional staff alerted to environmental health risks within the institutions.

Public Health Agencies

The responsibility of a corrections department to provide its own environmental health staff does not however exempt state or local public health agencies from their concurrent responsibilities. The official public health agencies can provide consultative and advisory services to correctional officials. Public health officials working cooperatively with directors of corrections can make a major contribution by giving leadership and offering technical assistance to help ensure that applicable standards of sanitation and hygiene are met.

Moreover, public health agencies have an im-

portant stake in assistance with the environmental health and safety problems of jails and prisons. There is the immediate and direct benefit in protecting a large vulnerable population against multiple environmental risk factors inherent in large highly congested multi-service correctional institutions. Control of infectious diseases, prevention of heat stress, and reducing the incidence of disabling injuries is as important for the jail and prison population and the correctional staff as for any other segment of a community's human resources pool.

Conclusions

We have not as of this writing assessed changes in the behavior (i.e., applying the knowledge and skills learned in the course) of the course participants—most of whom reported a lack of knowledge of the theory and practice of environmental health prior to pursuing the course. Nonetheless, we believe this initial program represents a significant step toward improving environmental conditions in the Puerto Rico correctional facilities. Followup studies (1- and 2-year intervals) are planned to determine the real impact of this program.

As with any new program of this scope, there are policies and procedures to be implemented as well as several issues to be addressed. Among the most important matters are those dealing with the authority of the institutional sanitation officer to set priorities and effect significant change within a quasi-military operation. Although the environmental health program has been launched, a system-wide approach to facility maintenance, housekeeping, and general upkeep is still evolving. Decisions about emerging issues will be addressed as the Puerto Rico correctional authorities continue their efforts to improve the jail and prison system and comply with other provisions of the Federal court order.

But it is clear, not only from evidence in the Puerto Rico system but in Federal and state correctional systems across the country, that as the number of men and women under some form of correctional supervision continues to increase, so will the magnitude of the biological and physical environment to serve this population. Not only will these institutions have all of the problems of the average community of comparable size but for the most part, these problems will be accentuated by the basic "ecology" of the correctional system.

These developments will call for the active participation of environmental health personnel who are already in short supply. Thus, it will be necessary to develop strategies to meet this need. One approach is the training or retraining of correctional officers in basic environmental health.

How can correctional authorities afford more investment in environmental health service—including the cost of corrective actions—when it already costs approximately $20,000-225,000 a year to keep somebody behind bars?[8] More pertinent is the question: How can they afford not to provide services designed to prevent the development of substandard conditions that may increase the risk of disease, dysfunction, and premature death, not only behind the prison wall but in the outside community as well?

NOTES

[1]Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Prisoners in 1987*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 1988.

[2]Bureau of Justice Statistics, *BJS Data Report 1987*, Washington, DC, 1988.

[3]Personal communication with the Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, August 10, 1989.

[4]P.T. Giblin, "Effective Utilization of Indigenous Health Care Workers," *Public Health Rep., 104*, 1989, pp. 361-368.

[5]H.E. Allen and C.E. Simonsen, *Corrections in America*. New York: Macmillan Publishers, 1978, p. 414.

[6]Study in progress.

[7]Bureau of Justice Statistics, *BJS Data Report 1990*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, February 1990.

[8]J.J. DiIulio, "Punishing Smarter," *The Brookings Review*, Summer 1989, p. 5.