HEARING FOUR (Days 1-3)
Reentry
April 23–29, 2020

The following summary is intended to provide an overview and highlights of the testimonies and discussion during the hearings. For a full and detailed account of the hearings, please refer to the Commission website and the audio recordings and transcripts located there.

State of Reentry Panel, April 23, 2020

First Panelist: *Mr. Tony Lowden, Executive Director, Federal Interagency Council on Crime Prevention and Improving Reentry*

Highlights:

- What we do from the day the individual enters the criminal justice system determines how we can transition that individual back into society. Evidence-based corrections programs in Georgia and elsewhere begin on Day 1 with a transition accountability plan to insure individuals are prepared to go home the moment they are released.
- A reentry program at a Level 3 prison in Georgia stood up charter schools in prisons so that inmates could earn high school diplomas; brought in faith-based organizations to help with family reunification; and brought in companies that could hire returning citizens immediately upon release.
- Hope for Prisoners, founded by Jon Ponder in Las Vegas, offers leadership development and a variety of training programs for its clients to build and strengthen skills necessary for employment readiness, and pairs returning citizens with formerly incarcerated mentors.
- Similarly, the Credible Messengers program used by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Atlanta has former inmates meet returning citizens at the door upon release and walk them through work, case, and family reunification plans. Not reentry counselors, but reentry navigators.

Recommendations:

- Engage local community groups in reentry planning and coordination of aftercare. Share reentry plans with stakeholders prior to returning citizens' release. Reentry advocates can connect employers and the community in one holistic system.
- Use a program assessment inventory, to determine the strengths and weaknesses of existing correctional programs and ensure evidenced-based recidivism reduction programs are in place.
- Establish reentry plans prior to release and ensure case plans are developed which assign programs based on risk and responsivity.

Second Panelist: *FBI Special Agent Jason Hardy, author,* The Second Chance Club: Hardship and Hope after Prison

Highlights:

- Probation and parole are the final outcome of most felony convictions and should be at the heart of reentry discussions. There are about 4.5 million people on parole and probation in the U.S.—twice the prison population
- Five obstacles to effective reentry through probation and parole:

  - High parole/probation officer (PO) caseloads.
  - Lack of detox and treatment services outside the criminal justice system, and lack of funding for those that exist.
  - Lack of housing resources. Ten percent of inmates nationwide parole to the streets, at high risk or re-offense or overdose.
  - Lack of job training and employment opportunities.
  - Lack of mental health resources—not only care and treatment, but diagnosis, which may be required to access care and treatment.

- Probation and parole move clients out of the controlled environment of prison into the real world; they require new skillsets and new coping mechanisms. While it can feel cynical to think in terms not of wins and losses but of harm reduction, the ripple effect of harm reduced is considerable.

Recommendations:

- Reduce PO caseloads, allocate federal funds to supplement PO staffing in high crime/high poverty areas. Consider covering training costs.
- Provide federal funding for medication managed withdrawal services.
- Provide short-term rental vouchers to parolees; provide federal funding to support development of a halfway house network.
- Incentivize employers to recruit probationers and parolees, possibly through small business tax incentives.
- Mandate that all state-level felony inmates be screened for Medicaid eligibility before release, so that POs can connect clients immediately into needed healthcare services—especially for clients suffering from substance use and mental health disorders—who will then have a far better chance of not reoffending.

Third Panelist*: John Koufos, National Director of Reentry Initiatives, Right on Crime and Executive Director, Safe Streets & Second Chances*

Highlights:

- Inmates released without identification, or with outstanding fines and fees, are likely to be returned even before the parole system has a chance to work with them. These are low-hanging fruit—addressing these issues has a return on investment.
- The New Jersey Reentry Corporation is a reentry navigator, using a hub-and-spoke model to bring people in and conduct a centralized assessment for addiction, physical health, housing needs, workforce skills, and administrative issues such as IDs.
- The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) On the Job Training program, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, reimburses an employer for up to 50 percent of a person's salary as long as they are working towards industry-recognized credentials. Providing IDs and resolving outstanding fines will make many returning citizens eligible for this program.
- Good programs to look at and emulate:
  - The Federal Reentry Court in the District of New Jersey and the reentry courts in Newark and Camden.
  - The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC), under Secretary John Wetzel, is connecting PennDOT to the prison system to alleviate ID issues.
  - Director Heidi Washington won a national award for the Michigan DOC's Vocational Village job training program. This is a first-of-its-kind skilled trades training program

and immersive learning community, where prisoners can complete career and technical education in a number of high-demand fields including welding, machining, robotics, automotive technology, building trades, masonry, and commercial truck driving.

- Bryan Stirling, Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections, has ensured that the state offices of Motor Vehicles, Labor, and Human Services have standing offices in the state's three reentry prisons to connect inmates to services.

Recommendations:

- Every inmate needs to leave incarceration with a DMV-issued driver's license or ID card. Valid ID is the most basic requirement for access to other services needed for success in reentry.
- Create a system to resolve fines, fees, and low-level charges before release. Prevent inmates from sitting in prison on detainers that could have been resolved during their sentences.
- Align the incentives for the application process to the Department of Labor's WIOA On the Job Training program. This will require little to no extra money, as most jurisdictions don't spend their whole allocation.

Fourth sPanelist: ***Dr. Grant Duwe, Research Director at Minnesota Department of Corrections***

Highlights:

- Judging by post-release outcomes like recidivism and employment, we don't do reentry well in the U.S.: five-year re-arrest rates are near 80 percent and ex-prisoner unemployment rates are much higher than those of the rest of the U.S. population. But if reentry begins when a person enters prison, then to improve reentry outcomes, we must rethink how we do corrections. Punitive strategies alone are costly and ultimately ineffective in promoting desistance from crime.
- Effective evidence-based interventions during incarceration are those that target known risk factors for reoffending. They include substance use disorder treatment, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), sex offender treatment, and some education and employment programs. Collectively, the body of studies on effective interventions is known as the What Works Literature.
- Effective interventions don't affect the overall recidivism rate if they're underused. In many states, only one to two percent of the prison population has access to CBT, for example.
- According to the What Works Literature, programming delivered to lower-risk subjects can sometimes make their outcomes worse. This shouldn't be taken as an excuse not to offer interventions, but to target them more carefully.
- Prison infrastructure has been built to emphasize isolation, security, and control, not to facilitate programming delivery. Sentencing guidelines also need to be redesigned to make sure inmates have time to participate in effective programming, which often lasts between three and nine months. Shorter sentences are simply warehousing—as are the remainders of longer sentences, if programming has been completed successfully.

Recommendations:

- Eliminate warehousing. Prisoners who do not participate in evidence-based programming have significantly worse outcomes for conduct in prison and employment and recidivism post-release.
- Downsizing prisons will allow more programming delivery without cost increases—not just by reducing populations, but by freeing up physical space for programming use. We can downsize prison populations without risk to public safety by restricting readmission for probation and parole violations, which make up about two-thirds of all prison admissions. We can also shorten length of stay for inmates with longer sentences who have completed effective programming.

- Reallocate the savings from reducing prison populations into more programming for those who remain in prison, and for lower-risk probation and parole violators to allow them to remain in the community.
- Leverage technological advancements to provide more cost-effective ways to ramp up programming delivery, such as online classes.

April 23 Question-and-Answer Period

Q: Do you have any thoughts on the concept of collateral consequences as a contributor to recidivism? What are specific items, such as issuing ID cards, that the commission could address to reduce the contribution of collateral consequences?

A: Collateral consequences are a tremendous problem; the National Inventory of Collateral Consequences was updated by the Council of State Governments' Justice Center last year that found 40,000 such consequences. Occupational licensing is one: many jobs from hair braiding to construction work prevent returning citizens from obtaining licenses; the state may end up wasting money training inmates for jobs they can't legally hold. Remedying this is a good area to focus on—it makes economic and public safety sense, has bipartisan support, and in many states, the licensing boards are under the Attorney General's office.

A: Also consider "ban-the-box" legislation. In many rural communities where prisons and jails are located, inmates do jobs from mowing lawns to balancing city budgets, but after release they can't even apply for the jobs they were doing while incarcerated. Make it possible to inmates to continue to practice trades they've learned on the inside, and become taxpayers. Some returning citizens released within the last year have started businesses, but because they have not yet filed taxes, can't access the COVID-related government stimulus payments they need to keep those businesses going.

Q: Can you share thoughts on the lack of jail-based programming and what might be available through judicially led reentry programs—how do we bridge that gap?

A: We can't be afraid of our assessment tools. Right now, we're filling up prisons and jails with people who really need to go to a mental health court or a drug addiction program. We need to use assessment tools on the inside and on the outside, at sentencing, so that we know which programs are working and use that knowledge as part of a sentencing package.

A: Some states, such as New Jersey, have passed mandatory drug court laws for certain offenses—if you present with an addiction, have a certain background, and the offense isn't disqualifying, you go to drug court or prison. Although it's post-sentencing, the New Jersey reentry courts are a good model—judges connect community service providers to the population. The Blue Heart program lets officers bring someone to rehab rather than jail, before they see a judge—the person who presents in sobriety or recovery at sentencing looks different than someone still in active addiction.

A: The drug court model is where POs see the biggest success stories. There's a clearly defined division of labor—the PO doesn't have to be the counselor and the police officer and the social worker all in one. Drug courts assign a whole team to each individual, especially those with mental health facilities or veteran's courts. They're treated as valued, they invest in things and succeed.

A: What if all courts had specialists—chief community advising officers—as some do across the country who could help judges make decisions around program and service placements. That kind of resource could lower the incarceration rate tremendously. Judges have the discretion to direct people into programs for addiction, homelessness, etc., but we need specialists who can assess their needs and make program recommendations.

Returning to Work After Incarceration Panel, April 28, 2020

First Panelist*: BJay Pak, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia*

Highlights:

- In conceptualizing its reentry program, the Northern District of Georgia focused on achieving a lower three-year recidivism rate than the national average of 68 percent (according to a 2018 Bureau of Justice Statistics report). Georgia's rates were comparable—70 percent of returning citizens who were rearrested were arrested more than once after release.
- Researchers focused on the demographics at highest risk of re-offense: males, people of color, youth, and the less educated. Based on the success of the Credible Messenger prevention program, the Northern District adopted a program to connect credible messengers with returning citizens—trained mentors who have been incarcerated.
- Early and limited research show promising impact and outcomes for prevention programs of this type—the Arches Transformative Mentoring Program in New York lowered felony arrest rates by 69 percent after 12 months and 57 percent after 24 months. A 2017 Urban Institute study showed that the approach improves program engagement, compliance, stakeholder relationships, and rearrest rates for gun violence and antisocial behavior.
- The adult reentry initiative began in July 2018 in Atlanta among young men serving the last 12 to 18 months of incarceration for violent crimes or gun- or gang-related offenses. All were at high risk of re-offense: low rates of education, employment, and marriage, 51 percent rate of validated gang membership. They identified their most pressing needs as employment (93%), healthcare (83%), support networks (80%), transportation (70%), and ID and housing. 91 percent reported the need for a mentor.
- The program spans six months of weekly meetings with mentors, the first three focusing on cognitive behavioral assessment and developing rapport and the last three on job skills, family reunification, and life skills such as financial literacy. The mentors played an important role in matching returning citizens with potential employers willing to hire them. Upon program graduation, private sector partners provided each graduate with a new business suit, shirt, and tie.
- The credible messengers helped with interview preparation and continued to serve as mentors and support systems. 60 percent of the program's 25 graduates to date are still in regular contact with their mentors and doing well, and 70 had found employment. Four have reoffended, none violently.

Recommendations:

- A long-term commitment is necessary to train and support a Credible Messengers program—plan on a period of at least three years for recruiting, vetting, and retention.
- Funding or grant resources for nonprofits working with this population need to last longer than year-to-year grants, in order to provide stability for this long-term planning and investment.
- Fund a research partner to serve as an independent evaluator for the program. Make sure that data tracking and continuous quality improvement reviews are maintained.

Second Panelist*: Nate Brown, Director of Programs, Oklahoma Department of Corrections*

Highlights:

- The Programs Unit of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections provides an all-inclusive reentry plan for each of its 9,000 yearly discharges. The plan connects returning citizens to ID, residence, transportation, finances, social and legal support, employment, and other social services such as mental health and veterans services.
- The education unit is the largest Programs component, with a current enrollment of 1,840 students in high school and college programs. Teachers in the unit also provide life skills reentry programming.
- The Second Chance Pell program supports partnerships between institutions of higher education and prisons and was recently expanded by the U.S. Department of Education. This expansion included the Kate Barnard correctional facility in Oklahoma City. The Kate Barnard receives many inmates coming from larger institutions with educational programs, who need access to college classes to continue their studies.
- Second Chance was implemented at the Kate Barnard through a partnership with Langston University, with which the Programs Unit already had an MOA in place to offer courses at another facility. In the 250-bed facility, there were 80 participants.

Recommendations:

- Conduct studies of, and provide funding that supports, technological advances in providing education and employment training in correctional settings. Conduct studies of the needs of businesses and industries in high-demand fields, and compare them with the types of courses being offered to incarcerated individuals. Make sure that the college programs you are offering actually tie into fields that will be sources of employment.
- Support the Pell Initiative expansion and consider ways to aid in funding the project. Need and demand for college courses is high and with additional funding, access can be expanded.
- Support efforts to reduce restrictive policies and rules for professional licensure, especially in high-demand areas, so that returning citizens are able to use credentials they have earned in prison.
- Study ways to allow long-distance transfers of returning citizens to areas with high employment demand, including interstate transfers.
- Provide more funding for all-inclusive and community-directed reentry services, incorporating employment, education, and treatment, particularly in rural areas.
- Support research and funding for infrastructure and technology to promote distance learning for justice-involved individuals—again, particularly in rural areas. In rural Oklahoma even the Department of Corrections can't get reliable internet service at its probation/parole sub-offices.
- Lastly, research ways to expand opportunities for technology-sector training and education for justice-involved individuals—for example, in coding and software development. These are jobs that can often be done remotely, which provides another answer to the mismatch between job and worker availability.

Third Panelist*: John Wetzel, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*

Highlights:

- The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections oversees 44,000 inmates in 25 prisons and 41,000 individuals on parole. 20,000 individuals leave the state's prisons every year. The department takes a broad approach to reentry, seeing it as a progression.
- Reverse-engineering reentry starts by looking at the characteristics of people entering the system:
    - 40% don't have a high school diploma.
    - 70% or more have a substance use disorder, of whom 21% suffer from an opioid addiction.
    - Nearly a third suffer from significant mental illness.
    - There is significant overlap between these groups.
    - For these and other reasons, many do not have a long or legal work history.
    - Many are experiencing homelessness when they enter the system.
- Any reentry plan should focus on making people less likely to commit a crime than when they came in. These plans must be individualized and localized—there can't be a single approach to, e.g., employment for someone going back to Philadelphia and someone going back to the center of the state.
- Pennsylvania received a Department of Education grant to assess new inmates' employment interests and aptitudes when they enter the system, and provide vocational services consistent with that from the beginning. The grant also funded creation of a strategic partnership with labor and industry groups to look at the jobs available in the areas individuals are returning to. This approach is relevant at the federal level, as the Bureau of Prisons releases individuals to all 50 states.
- More important, however, is addressing addiction and mental illness. Programming for these behavioral health disorders needs to follow individuals into the community, with the programming provided during incarceration building the foundations for later success. Pennsylvania has focused on medication assisted treatment, especially Vivitrol, for people with opioid addictions, and has instituted therapeutic communities in most prisons.
- To support sustainable housing, they have created a voucher program and used halfway houses. In halfway houses, Pennsylvania uses performance contracts: service providers' pay rate is based on residents' recidivism rate: Normal pay for a rate within one standard deviation of the norm, a bonus for a rate lowered beyond that, and termination if residents' recidivism increases in two successive six-month periods.
- The reentry program also tries to ensure returning citizens have ID cards, via a partnership with the Department of Transportation to provide them, and are connected to healthcare, through reconnecting with private insurance or accessing Medicaid. They have had a 90 percent success rate with ID provision and a 75 percent success rate with healthcare.
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pennsylvania had a 65 percent employment rate for people on parole. That has now dropped below 50 percent and is projected to drop to 30 percent. Seven halfway houses out of 35 are not taking new residents due to quarantine.

Recommendations:

- Think about the impacts the pandemic will have on reentry over the next 18 to 24 months.
- Providing ID removes a critical barrier to addiction treatment and health care. ID is more difficult to provide at the federal level than at the state level, but it is critical.

- Partnerships between corrections and higher education benefit the educational institutions involved, particularly community colleges, as well as the incarcerated students. Technical education is a particularly underserved area, and another reason to partner with labor and industry to discover community employment needs.

Question-and-Answer Period, April 28, 2020

Q: For U.S. Attorney Pak: Are there any other U.S. Attorney offices that have instituted a Credible Messenger program like Georgia's? Or state or local programs?

A: No U.S. Attorney's offices have, but they're catching on at the state level. Pak is willing to share his expertise with other U.S. Attorneys who are interested in forming this sort of partnership with their state corrections departments.

Q: For Mr. Brown: How does Oklahoma's education unit motivate the people who enter Second Chance Pell program? And what keeps them motivated to continue and earn degrees?

A: Motivation is mostly a matter of showing them what they can achieve on the outside; success stories from previous graduates help with this. One woman who earned high school and college degrees while incarcerated is now an attorney practicing in Oklahoma and Texas. Teachers focus on showing students the opportunities a degree will open up, and motivation is largely self-driven—participants are seeking to better provide for themselves and their families.

Q: For Secretary Wetzel: You were a warden of a country jail and significantly decreased its population. How were you able to do that?

A: This was in Franklin County, PA—very rural, conservative, Christian, straight-ticket Republican county with a significantly growing jail population. Main drivers of that increase were addiction and the programming needs discussed here. It was an urban legend in the area that most of the jail population was from outside the county, but the vast majority were not only local, but had been born within 50 miles of the county. So they engaged with the religious community to try to keep people out of the system altogether. Programming infrastructure they created included a day reporting center and treatment access. Using interns from a university, they instituted pretrial risk assessment, targeting who needed to be incarcerated and reducing recidivism. In total, they reduced the jail population by about 20%.

Transitioning from Incarceration to the Community Panel, April 29, 2020

First Panelist*: Tim Johnson, founder and President of the Orlando Serve Foundation and NFL veteran*

Highlights:

- The Orlando Serve Foundation was founded in 2016 as a neutral convener of 120 organizations in central Florida providing resources and systems of care to individuals and families living in vulnerable places, such as shelters or the woods. After several years, it began to strategically narrow its focus to its guests' greatest need, which was assistance with legal issues.
- A 2018 pilot reentry program had four components: prerelease orientation; ID assistance; court hearings for addressing court costs, fines, and fees, by conversion to new payment plans or retrieval from collections; and community and work release programs for supervised offenders.

- Short-timers about to be released are given information about ID assistance and referred to community centers where the foundation holds events. There, they can be educated, screened, and scheduled for court hearings if they qualify.
- Corrections officers will screen and vet incarcerated individuals to see if they qualify for assistance, and foundation attorneys can then work with them while they're still in jail.
- People on supervised work release can also attend the foundation's community events.

Second Panelist*: Assistant Commissioner Jay Sanders, Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council*

Highlights:

- Georgia has the eighth-largest state population but the fourth-largest prison population: 56 to 57,000 individuals are in custody, counting those on probation alternatives. The corrections department releases and admits 17 to 18,000 inmates per year, operating about 90 facilities on a $1.2 billion budget.
- Georgia has developed an automated, in-house risk/needs assessment, normed on the state's prison population. It uses Andrews and Bonta's eight criminogenic needs as a framework to determine how the individual's needs should be addressed while in custody. These needs are triaged, and the highest-risk, highest-need individuals are put into treatment programs as quickly as possible.
- All programming in the Department of Corrections (DOC) is evidence-based; two facilities have been turned into evidence-based prisons, taking a holistic approach to dealing with incarcerated individuals.
- Georgia's overall recidivism rate (defined as felony conviction within 3 years of release) is 27.6%; that falls to 24% for individuals who have completed cognitive programs, 19% for GED graduates, and 18.6% for graduates of vocational programs. Since FY18 almost 12,000 inmates in the state have received GEDs. In addition, the DOC partners with area charter schools and technical colleges; over the last five fiscal years, more than 57,000 inmates have completed post-secondary vocational programs.
- Reentry assessment centers allow inmates to research housing and employment on Chromebooks with whitelisted websites and work on resumes and interview skills, as well as learn about changes to technology.
- The process of acquiring reentry documents begins with the birth certificate. There are dedicated staff in the Vital Records department who pull birth certificates for Georgia-born inmates. The DOC has an MOU with the Social Security Administration with the goal of providing a social security card for every inmate prior to release. Recently, they have begun working with the Department of Driver Services to allow inmates to obtain driver's licenses if eligible or state ID cards. All these documents are stored in a central repository and shipped to the facility the inmate will release from about six months before the release date to ensure they will be on hand.

Recommendations:

- Seek additional funding and staff education to make sure no inmate is released without having completed prescribed behavioral and educational programming while incarcerated.
- Seek funding and training to ensure there is a warm hand-off from the correctional facility to the community—whether to a physical or mental health care provider, community supervision provider, or probation or parole office.

- Consider forming cooperative agreements among state and federal agencies to provide returning citizens with personal ID and documents.

Third Panelist*: Steven Perkins, Warden, Georgia Department of Corrections Metro Reentry Facility*

Highlights:

- The Metro Reentry Facility in Atlanta is the first reentry facility in Georgia; it took in its first returning citizen on May 1, 2018. The 355-bed facility uses evidence-based practices and community collaboration to reduce recidivism. It takes in minimum- to medium-security prisoners with 12 to 24 months left on their sentences
- The facility was built to serve people returning to a nine-county area in and around metro Atlanta. A large part of the Georgia prison population will be returning to this area.
- All staff, including food service and maintenance, is trained in risk reduction, mental health, and the New Freedom curriculum. Correctional officers are trained and given the opportunity to conduct some of the programming.
- Mentors act as go-betweens between the returning citizens and other staff. They have an open-door policy for the other staff, as well as running group programming for returning citizens.
- Community and non-profit organizations are heavily involved in programming. There's a church that provides food and volunteers for family reunification events, a Little Readers program that provides books for returning citizens to read with their children, the nonprofit Georgia Justice Project that helps resolve outstanding legal issues, and the Credible Messenger program.

Recommendations:

- The federal government should develop more facilities like Atlanta's Metro Reentry Facility with federal grants and funding, and should give more support to community-based partners who participate in programs like Metro Reentry.

Fourth Panelist: *Dr. H. Jean Wright II, Director of Behavioral Health and Justice Related Services, Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services*

Highlights:

- While things like IDs, resumes, housing, and job training are necessities for reentry, we need to look beyond them—from reentry to reintegration. Beyond making sure returning citizens are housed and employed, we need to make sure they're grounded and anchored to the community. And the most important factor for this is family reintegration.
- Pennsylvania FACT (Fathers And Children Together) is a program that focuses on both reintegration and prevention. Young men who grow up without fathers are twice as likely to end up in jail as those who grow up with two parents, even controlling for other factors such as race, income, and education. There are 1.1 million incarcerated fathers of minor children—and 120,000 incarcerated mothers, but they have not been able to launch a companion program for women.
- The Community Forgiveness and Restoration program recruits faith communities—churches, synagogues, masjids—to adopt returning citizens 12 to 18 months before release. Life coaches work with them so that they have a support system when they come out and are able to connect to community resources.
- Both these programs can also connect returning citizens with clinical psychologists to treat behavioral health problems, substance use disorders, and other mental health concerns. The Department of Behavioral Health also provides aftercare programs for children of incarcerated parents and other supports for community primary caregivers.

Recommendations:

- The Commission should support the development of reentry programs that go beyond traditional training and support full family and community reintegration. Create a task force to research, design, and recommend best practices, consisting of active clinicians, public servants, local grassroots organizations, etc. This task force should look into motivational interviewing, developing emotional intelligence, and other areas for education and training.
- Provide funding to private foundations, certified peer specialists, and individuals who have already reentered to support the implementation of successful programs to reduce recidivism.
- Improve the quality of life for returning citizens to help keep them reintegrated.
- Simplify grant applications for organizations that cannot afford the expense of a grant writer, or proved enhanced technical assistance for those organizations.
- Use the current and prevailing research that identifies and describes the impact on children, families, and communities of social determinants: poverty, un- and underemployment, food insecurity, and over-incarceration. Remember that more than 95 percent of inmates return to the community; give them the support to reintegrate and stay there.

Question-and-Answer Period, April 29, 2020

Q: For Commissioner Sanders: Can you give specific ways in which you believe we can change correctional culture, specifically around reentry?

A: In Georgia, they're using what they call a multifunctional officer, as Warden Perkins described—an officer who goes through a lot of the same training as the counselors and is able to teach inmates and lead programming. They've also done motivational interviewing and looked into their hiring practices. But with the large population of the Georgia correctional system, everyone knows someone's whose been affected by it—these people almost all come home. So the main thing has been continually training and educating the staff on how to help them.

Q: For Mr. Johnson: As a private nonprofit organization, how did your foundation create its relationship with the court, and become trusted to work with it on paying back fines, fees, and costs?

A: He's a pastor, and it began with his church organizing one-day all-in-one (legal, health, jobs, education) events in stadiums—he approached contacts in the corporate world for financial and logistical support first, then approached the office of the mayor and the county to get them on board, and then went to the faith community for outreach and arranged 100 buses to bring people in on Easter. When they continued to get legal aid calls and questions year-round, they organized the legal aid arm on a permanent basis. Court days were arranged as one-day events at first, coordinated between the churches, attorneys and legal aid volunteers, and the chief judge, clerk of courts, public defender's office, and state attorney's office.

Q: For Dr. Wright: Can you be more specific about the invisible barriers to receiving grants for smaller community-based organizations?

A: The Department of Behavioral Health was able to give small grants—$5,000 or so—to grassroots organizations. They've also taken part in sponsored events, helping with advertising or with putting on workshops. In working with these organizations, they found that most do not have grant writers and many have no one on staff who has expertise in navigating the federal grant world. Some rely on relationships with state legislators to get state funding or block grants, but not every organization has or can develop those relationships.

Q: Is there a way of seeding activities or programs with a shown ability to succeed, so they can be sustained by the savings they realize? If the savings could be put back into the programs, they only need the seed, not continuous funding—which will probably be scarce over the next year or two.

A: [Dr. Wright]: The short answer is yes. This is what they've done in Philadelphia, where programs and initiatives that started around 2010 with grants have been transitioned from grant funding. The numbers are easy to come by for the costs of keeping people out of jail, but it is harder to quantify the monetary gains of people working good jobs and paying taxes, or of being reconnected with their families and keeping their children out of the justice system entirely. And of course the quality of life benefits can't be quantified.

A: [Commissioner Sanders]: It's much easier to pull together resources in metro areas than in rural areas. Any ability to fund nonprofits working in the rural areas would be very helpful, especially for groups working on prevention and to reduce recidivism. In Georgia it costs $20,000 to $22,000 a year to incarcerate someone, so that is savings realized by keeping someone out of the system. Judges need to have community-based options to do that, especially for people with mental health and substance use issues.

A: [Mr. Johnson]: In four years, his foundation has seen almost $2 million in court costs and fees reduced to payment plans or community service and has not received any grant funding to do so—they didn't have grant writers. Because of his sports background, he had the connections to build relationships to grind out these arrangements without grant assistance. The stadium events in the first two years relied on over $900,000 in in-kind corporate commitments and $400,000 or $500,000 in cash. Now the program runs on $13,000 to $15,000 a year because they rely on volunteers and everyone in Orlando trusts them. For them, funding wouldn't be a seed—it would be an accelerator.