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R. Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National Drug Control Policy will address graduates of Court Assisted Recovery Effort, and RESTART programs of the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts on November 8, 2010 at 3:00 p.m in Courtroom 10 on the 5th Floor of the John J. Moakley Courthouse. Chief Judge Mark L. Wolf, Judge Patti Saris, the Court's liaison with the Probation Office, and Magistrate Judges Leo T. Sorokin and Timothy S. Hillman, the judicial officers assigned to C.A.R.E. and RESTART, and the graduates will also make brief remarks. A brief reception will follow the event.

“From their inception, the goal of the C.A.R.E. and RESTART programs has been to offer nontraditional alternatives and intense supervision in order to lower recidivism rates. Providing individuals with a real opportunity for change, combined with a heightened sense of accountability, has resulted in encouraging and positive results. To date, our data has shown a 20% lower rate of re-arrest for program participants, than that of defendants under traditional supervised release,” said Chief Judge Wolf. “Today’s graduates are the most tangible example of how effective alternative rehabilitation methods can be to incarceration. Their successes and the innovative treatment methods applied by C.A.R.E. and RESTART have made this a national model, being replicated around the country.”

“I applaud today’s graduates from the C.A.R.E. and RESTART programs – they are living proof that alternatives to incarceration like drug courts and reentry courts are an effective tool for reducing drug use and its consequences,” said Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National Drug Policy. “The Obama Administration strongly supports innovative criminal justice approaches that closely supervise non-violent, drug-involved offenders and change their behavior with measures short of incarceration.”

C.A.R.E., one of the first programs of its kind in federal court, was established in order to promote public safety by reducing recidivism, and assist defendants under federal supervision to establish and maintain sober, employed and law abiding lives. The United States Probation Office, United States Attorney’s Office, the Federal Defender’s Office, and several treatment providers participate in the program. The program, which requires a minimum commitment of one year, accepts defendants with serious substance abuse problems who are serving terms of Supervised Release after completion of their prison sentence. Over the past several years, other federal districts have also established similar programs.

Participating defendants must appear regularly before the court to review their progress and conduct. United States Magistrate Judge Leo Sorokin presides at these weekly hearings, where success is encouraged while any non-compliance is met with immediate sanctions ranging from verbal reprimands to short jail terms. Before graduating, a defendant will appear in court at least 26 times, meet with a Probation Officer another 40 times and submit to frequent drug testing. Defendants in the program are also subject to much closer supervision than other federal defendants, therefore earning a one year reduction of their term of federal supervision at the end of the program.

The combination of close supervision, prompt sanctions and treatment, and employment assistance, has proven to promote better results than the traditional approach to supervising defendants with drug addictions. While this is one of the first federal courts to take this innovative approach to defendants with drug addictions on Supervised Release, other federal courts are now following our lead and establishing similar programs.

RESTART (**Reentry: Empowering Successful Todays And Responsible Tomorrows**) is a voluntary program for high risk ex-offenders presently on supervised release. Successful completion of the program results in a one year reduction in the time that a participant is sentenced to supervised release. In order to graduate from RESTART a participant must have 52 weeks of compliance in the program and supervised release. Compliance consists of several components. First, participants must be otherwise compliant with their conditions of supervised release. Secondly, they must actively seek or maintain employment or full time schooling. If unemployed, in addition to documented job search, participants are required to perform community service. Finally, participants must attend RESTART court sessions at which they receive additional assignments specifically tailored to their situation, i.e., make contact with the Department of Revenue regarding child support, apply to Mass Rehab, etc.

The RESTART team has worked hard to develop relationships with traditional probationary resources and to cultivate new partnerships from non-traditional areas. All of the following agencies and organizations have made presentations at our RESTART court sessions and have enthusiastically offered support services to our participants:

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles
Legal Advocacy and Resource Center
Aids Action Committee
City of Boston Street Workers

In addition to the above agencies, both CARE and RESTART have been the beneficiaries of significant assistance from the Federal Bar Association, the Boston Bar Association and the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association. The Boston Bar Association sponsored a two evening program on financial literacy which was mandatory for all RESTART participants. The Federal Bar Association and the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association canvassed their membership in order to provide suitable work clothing for a clothes closet in the probation office as part of a 'Dress for Success' initiative. The Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association and the Federal Bar Association have each set up mock job interviews and job interviewing coaching programs for our participants.

Members of the media should contact Christina DiIorio-Sterling, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office at 617-748-3356, to confirm attendance and coordinate logistics. We look forward to seeing you.

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