



correctional **Newsfront**

Criminal Justice Reform Act Signed Into Law

By Susan McNaughton, Press Secretary

On July 5, 2012, Gov. Tom Corbett signed into law legislation that will significantly change the state's criminal justice system, and the corrections system in particular.

Gov. Corbett signed into law Senate Bill 100, which is now Act 122 of 2012 – the Criminal Justice Reform Act.

"Senate Bill 100 was the legislative vehicle to implement Justice Reinvestment Initiative recommendations," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "We are very excited about this Act, because it provides us with an opportunity to greatly improve the state's criminal justice system over the next few years."

Wetzel said the law allows corrections officials to focus on their mission of delivering programs, education and job training to inmates in an effort to prevent them from committing future crime, thus reducing recidivism and reducing crime.

"It allows us to focus our resources in the right places," he said.



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What is unique about this law is that legislation passed both chambers unanimously. This was a bi-partisan effort to make improvements, and nearly every group with an interest in this effort was involved in the process, including sentencing judges, district attorneys, victims' rights groups, inmate advocacy groups and employees from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, the Sentencing Commission, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Welfare, juvenile justice officials and more.

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Secretary Wetzel Talks About...

Improving our System

We have seen many changes in our system over the last few years. From simply improving communications to improving processes that hadn't changed or been challenged for years, if ever.

With the passage of Senate Bill 100, there will be more changes. But they continue to be good changes.

A major change will be the way we do community corrections. Yes, it will be a challenge to change something that's been in place for many decades, but we -- working as a team -- can succeed.



People often are afraid of change because it results in something new. Let's all embrace change. Embrace the challenge of making our system a better system... one that is the best in the nation. That's our goal.

I look forward to working with all of you to meet this goal.

Stay tuned for continued improvement... and embrace it!

In the words of Henry Ford, who revolutionized transportation, "If I asked people what they wanted they would have said faster horses."

Newsfront

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The law makes the following changes:

- Expand the eligibility of intermediate punishment for an offense involving drugs and alcohol.
- See that parole violators, in most cases, are returned to community corrections centers rather than a state prison.
- Ban individuals convicted of certain misdemeanors from being sentenced to state prison.
- Eliminate state inmate pre-release.
- Creation of a risk-assessment tool for judges to use when sentencing individuals.

"A major change to the corrections system is the elimination of pre-release," Wetzel said. "Essentially it has been an early release for inmates. In Pennsylvania, we and the governor believe in truth-in-sentencing, and this ensures the offenders will serve 100 percent of their minimum sentences."

Wetzel said this also will save the DOC's resources.

"A lot of resources are spent on the pre-release review, approval and placement process; and yet only one-third of those offenders reviewed for pre-release actually even get approved for pre-release. And of those on pre-release, one-third of them fail."

Wetzel said the pre-release process is a huge drain on DOC resources that simply doesn't work.

"It doesn't make sense to continue doing something (the pre-release system was begun in the late 1960s/early 1970s) just because it's always been done," Wetzel emphasized. "If something doesn't work, we are going to fix it or eliminate it. In this case, the best thing to do was eliminate pre-release. It just doesn't work."

The legislation allows for better use of the community corrections system. Over the next year, DOC officials will work to restructure that system.

As a result of this change, employees and inmates have been notified that as of January 1, 2013, pre-release will no longer exist. However, for those inmates who already were approved for pre-release placement and whose minimum sentence expiration date does not go beyond May 31, 2013, the DOC will continue to process those offenders through the community corrections system. All others will not be considered. An option available to them now remains parole eligibility upon reaching their minimum sentence date.

"There were a lot of offenders and citizens who assumed pre-release was a right – that it was something that automatically happened as they neared their minimum," Wetzel said. "That was never the case. Thorough review was necessary, and as I said previously, required a lot of resources."

Wetzel said that now those resources can be used to prepare inmates for parole and ensure that those offenders who have completed all programs and are eligible for a parole hearing get one in a timely manner.

"This is an exciting time, especially for the Department of Corrections," Wetzel said. "We

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Moore Smeal Presented with “Trailblazer Award”

Shirley Moore Smeal, executive deputy secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, recently was honored with the Trailblazer Award by the National Organization of Black Women in Law Enforcement. She was one of several individuals from across the nation to be recognized with this special award, which was presented on June 30 in Pittsburgh.

“Shirley’s professionalism and dedication to one of the most difficult roles in law enforcement has improved the lives of her fellow citizens,” Governor Tom Corbett said. “Her sense of service and humanity have been gifts to the people of Pennsylvania.”

Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said that, for at least 10 years, Moore Smeal has led the department’s empowerment initiative where employees’ professional and personal growth is promoted, as well as recognized and appreciated for their diversity.

As executive deputy secretary, Moore Smeal supervises regional deputy secretaries and their facilities, as well as the Offices of County Inspections, Treatment Services, Population Management, Correction Education and Information Technology.

“The best thing that happened to the Department of Corrections is that Shirley agreed to stay on as executive deputy secretary,” Wetzel said. “We wouldn’t be where we are now without her. She is the driving force behind the implementation of change within the department.”

Moore Smeal, the first female to be named executive deputy secretary, began her career in 1987 as a clerk typist at the State Correctional Institution at Huntingdon.



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Since then she has moved progressively up the correctional ranks serving in increasingly responsible positions. After working at SCIs Smithfield, Albion and Camp Hill in a variety of capacities, she was appointed executive assistant to the secretary of corrections in 2001.

Moore Smeal was named superintendent of SCI Muncy in 2001, and three years later, named deputy secretary for the eastern region. From August 2010 until January 2011, she served as acting secretary for the department, until Wetzel appointed her to her current post.

Originally from Mount Union, Moore Smeal is a graduate of Edinboro University and a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. She is a member of the American Correctional Association and the Pennsylvania Prison Wardens Association.

The National Organization of Black Women in Law Enforcement, founded in 1985, is a non-profit organization devoted to furthering the hiring, training, retention and promotion of black females in law enforcement. It promotes a spirit of professionalism by preparing women through education and training to keep abreast of current theories and techniques.

What Motivates Shirley Moore Smeal



During her acceptance speech, Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal discussed her background, including being a single parent when she began working for the DOC.

She also commented on the beliefs and ethics taught to her by her parents. "I pay honor to my parents for the foundation and the work ethics they taught me that allowed me to rise to this level in my career," she said.

She also spoke of finding the balance between one's work and family. "Finding that balance makes us better in the work place."

Moore Smeal spoke of successes and challenges she has faced and said that all of the experiences -- good or bad -- have made her who she is today.

She also realizes that she wouldn't be where she is today if it were not for her co-workers who mentored her and supported her throughout her years in the prison system. She admitted that over the years there have been people who did not support her for various reasons, but she used those times to strengthen herself -- by working harder or going to college. Negativity was a challenge to her, a challenge to turn that negativity into a positive.

Department Officials Dedicate CoGeneration Plant

Corrections officials, in July, dedicated a cogeneration plant at the State Correctional Institution at Laurel Highlands that generates electricity and steam using methane gas from an area landfill.

"We look forward to protecting our state's environment through the operation of this state-of-the-art plant while, at the same time, reducing utility costs at our prison," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said.

Officials dedicated the plant to the memory of Robert Calik, who served as the department's Bureau of Operations director, with a plaque on the building. Calik, who died in 2008, played a key role in coordinating efforts between the department and Johnson Controls to bring this plant to fruition. His family attended today's ceremony.

Working with Johnson Controls, the prison's cogeneration plant produces electricity and steam using gas from the nearby Mostoller Landfill. The renewable energy resource eliminates the need for the prison to use coal-fired boilers.



Corrections Secretary John Wetzel speaks of cooperation and a clean environment at the dedication ceremony.



Calik family members unveil the plaque which dedicates the cogeneration plant in the memory of their husband, father and grandfather.

Excess electricity produced by the plant is sold back to the power grid, creating ongoing revenue for the prison and helping to offset project costs.

In addition to the cogeneration plant project, a number of facility upgrades to roofing, lighting, windows, plumbing, hot water tanks in several housing units and building controls were made to the prison, optimizing energy and water use.

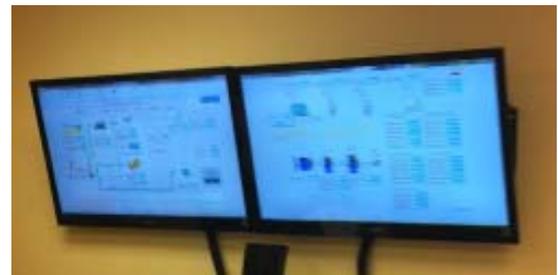
"Energy conservation measures will drastically reduce carbon emissions," said Robert Scott Sr., performance assurance specialist at Johnson Controls.

How the CoGeneration Plant Works

Methane gas is transported by pipeline approximately four miles from a nearby landfill to the prison's plant, where the gas is "scrubbed" or cleaned in order to work with it. It then is compressed and is burned. During the burning process, the plant creates steam and/or electricity. The steam is used by the prison for hot water for cooking and inmate showers, among other things. The steam is used to heat the facility, which previously used a coal powered system that dated back to the 1950s and was facing penalties from the EPA. The old plant was decommissioned. The prison now uses natural gas as a heat back-up to the steam created by the cogeneration plant. Electricity produced by the plant is used to power the prison, with any excess being sold back to the electric company.



The employees who operate the plant.



How employees monitor the input/output of the plant.

Documentation Necessary from Counties Prior to DOC Commitment

Act 84 of 1998 mandates that counties submit appropriate commitment documentation to the DOC. However, this mandate had never been enforced.

Beginning in July 2012, the DOC will no longer accept a commitment from the county if appropriate documentation is not provided.

In a June 2012 letter to president judges, DOC Secretary John Wetzel informed courts that the appropriate paperwork must be received at least 72 hours prior to commitment and that this change would be effective for any commitment on or after July 16, 2012.

"As part of examining and improving processes within the Department of Corrections, we have learned that we are only receiving the mandated commitment paperwork for commitments to the department 30% of the time," Wetzel said in his letter. "This paperwork, mandated by law which is to be received at the time of commit, allows us to both ensure the commitment to the department is appropriate and is a key part of our classification process."

Wetzel said that receiving the paperwork prior to commitment ensures that the commitment is proper, but it also avoids refusing commitments at intake.

"If a county shows up with an offender intending commitment to the DOC and has not provided the appropriate mandated documentation in advance, we will not accept the commitment, thus forcing the county to return the offender to the county until such documentation is provided to the DOC," Wetzel added.

To help the counties to provide this documentation, the DOC revised its DC-301 Act 84 Information Transmittal form. The form may

Required Documents

- Court commitment order form;
- Record of adjustment to the county correctional facility;
- Written notice of current medical or psychological conditions requiring treatment, including suicide attempts;
- All medical records of the county correctional facility relating to the inmate to the extent that those records may be disclosed under federal and state law;
- Written notice of current or previously ordered/administered medications;
- 48-hour supply of medication (due upon commitment, not to be included to be delivered 72-hours in advance);
- Written statement by the county correctional facility indicating:
 - Dates on which the inmate was incarcerated; and
 - Charges pending against the inmate with the offense tracking number; and
 - Date on which the inmate was released on bail, if any, and a copy of the bail order;
 - Any sentencing credit to which the inmate may be entitled;
- A copy of the sentencing order and any detainers filed against the inmate which the county has notice.

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Inmate Accountability Bank

By Susan Bensinger

Victims of crime often wonder whether or not their offender has taken responsibility for his/her actions and/or is remorseful; and inmates sometimes seek to share their acceptance of fault, responsibility and/or acknowledge pain caused by their actions with their victims. Offenders often wish to write a letter of apology/accountability to the victim of their crime.

Through a new program launched recently by the Office of Victim Advocate – called the Inmate Accountability Bank – such letters can be written by the inmate to the victim without violating DOC policy, which prohibits inmates from having contact with their crime victims.

“Under the Inmate Accountability Bank Program, registered crime victims are contacted when such a letter is received,” DOC Director of Victim Services Andrew Barnes said. “The victim then determines if or when they want to view the letter. They also inform us if they want the inmate to be informed that they received and read the letter.”

Any inmate can submit an apology letter to be stored in the inmate accountability bank. When OVA staff receives a letter, the message is reviewed for appropriateness before being forwarded to the victims who have indicated their willingness to receive such letters.

“If we receive a letter from an inmate whose victim has indicated they do not want to read such letters, we simply hold the letter,” Barnes said. “It is possible that, over time, a crime victim may change their mind. If that happens, we would make the letter available to them.”

Inmate participation in the Accountability Bank Program is voluntary and does not positively affect an offender’s release date or conditions of incarceration.

To learn more about the Inmate Accountability Bank, contact the Office of Victim Advocate toll-free at 800-322-4472 or visit their website at www.ova.state.pa.us.

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be printed and duplicated by the county and also is available for purchase in triplicate form from the DOC. This form identifies all of the mandated commitment documents and additional documents due within 30 days of sentence.

The DOC also developed a DC-487 Transfer of Health Information form, which will provide the DOC with written notice of current or previously ordered or administered medications prior to commitment to the DOC. This is to ensure continuity of care from the county to the state prison system.

County officials with questions on this process should contact Executive Assistant Tom Greishaw, Records Administrator Denise Wood or County Inspections and Services Director Kay Kishbaugh. Contact information is available on the DOC’s website at www.cor.state.pa.us under “DOC Key Staff, Bureaus & Offices.”

Drug Interdiction Unit Members Participate in Ceremony



DOC Captain D. Scott VanGorder speaking at a ceremony honoring K-9 handlers.

Earlier this year at the Pennsylvania Military Museum in Boalsburg, Pa., a ceremony was held honoring K-9 handlers in the military and law enforcement, including those in the therapy field.

Captain D. Scott VanGorder, director of the DOC's Drug Interdiction Unit, was a guest speaker at the event, and Quehanna Boot Camp Sgt. Myron Kyle assisted by planning and setting up the event as well as reading a poem titled, "The Beast."

This event was the first time in the state's history that K-9s and their handlers were honored at a statewide event. Sponsored by the Working K-9 Association of Central Pennsylvania (WKACP), the ceremony was the first of what is hoped to become an annual event.

VanGorder has headed the DIU for 20 years and has played an integral role in establishing the unit, selecting and training dogs and handlers and successfully leading searches of prisons and visitor vehicles -- all in an effort to keep drugs out of prison.

Kyle has been a member of WKACP for just more than three years. Prior to that, he had been a member of another search and rescue group. Presently, he is a training officer for the search and rescue part of WKACP and works to instruct new members on land navigation, outdoor survival skills, incident command system and search and rescue theories and practicalities. He is used as a law enforcement training aid for K-9 apprehension work for local police K-9 teams.

Organizations attending the ceremony included the Department of Corrections, Centre County District Attorney's Office, Heaven Scent Search and Rescue and the Huntingdon County Sheriff's Department.

Stephenson Named DOC's Teacher of the Year



Greg Stephenson

SCI Cambridge Springs' teacher Greg Stephenson earlier this year was named "Teacher of the Year" by Department of Corrections' Bureau of Correction Education.

Stephenson, a DOC employee since May 2005, was nominated for the award for his research and coordination with the American Board of Opticianry to have the spectacle certification exam proctored at SCI Cambridge Springs for inmates enrolled in the optical lab class. This certification exam has elevated the value of the opticianry certificate with regards to inmate community re-entry efforts in finding a job in that field.

Leaving prison with an opticianry certificate provides the inmate students with a leg-up on employment in the optical field because such certification is not required in Pennsylvania, which means that they have a more even playing field when applying for jobs with a felony history. It also gives the inmates more flexibility in applying for jobs in the surrounding states which do require certification.

Stephenson teaches a day-long optical class to 20 students every six months. He conducts pre-certification tutoring review sessions with students that are registered to take the exam. He facilitates the application completion for the American Board of Opticianry with the prison's business office. He also coordinates with the Correctional Industries manager to arrange class visits to the prison's CI optical lab and recommends suitable candidates for CI employment.

Stephenson graduated from University of Pittsburgh with a degree in political science. He studied opticianry at the Western School of Health and Business Careers in Pittsburgh, where he received an associate's degree in allied science in opticianry. While working in the field, Stephenson was asked to become an instructor there. He moved up from graduate to optical teacher to program director taking the existing program and restructuring it to be more effective over the next five years. Stephenson earned the American Board of Opticianry-Advanced Certification and the National Contact Lens examiners certificate. While at SCI Cambridge Springs, he completed credits for the Voc I certificate from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Harry Named SCI Camp Hill Superintendent

Laurel Harry, a 16-year corrections veteran, has been named superintendent of the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill, the Department of Corrections announced in July.

"Laurel is an extremely dedicated, skilled and organized individual," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "Her progressively complex corrections background and her day-to-day experiences inside several of our prisons have helped to mold her for this most recent appointment."

Harry, 40, of Waynesburg, Greene County, is the first woman to hold the position of superintendent at this particular prison.

She began her corrections career in 1996 as a full-time psychology intern at the Federal Correctional Institution in Morgantown, W. Va. Later that same year, she became a drug/alcohol case management specialist in Washington County.



Laurel Harry

In 1999, Harry began her career with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections as a drug and alcohol treatment specialist at the State Correctional Institution in Waynesburg. Several years later, she was promoted to drug and alcohol treatment specialist supervisor and, for seven months, served as acting unit manager.

She divided her time between SCI Waynesburg, as it was being closed, and SCI Fayette, which recently had opened in Fayette County. In 2004, she was named unit manager at SCIs Greene and Fayette.

In 2008, Harry was named classification and program manager at SCI Camp Hill, a position she held for 16 months before serving as a staff assistant to the deputy secretary for the central region at the department's Central Office.

For more than a year, Harry served as deputy superintendent for SCI Waynesburg and was responsible for overseeing contract negotiations with property owners as officials were contemplating reopening the facility.

In February 2011, when the decision was made not to reopen SCI Waynesburg, Harry was appointed deputy superintendent for centralized services at SCI Graterford, the position she currently holds.

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SCI Cresson Employees Assist with DOC Bus Accident

In April, a DOC bus heading from Smithfield to Pine Grove – a normal inmate transport -- was involved in a head-on collision about three miles south of SCI Cresson.

Two SCI Pine Grove corrections officers and 10 inmates were on the bus when another vehicle crossed the center line crashing into the bus. Since SCI Cresson was so close to the accident, 14 officers and four commissioned officers were dispatched to the scene with a variety of equipment. After setting up a command post at the scene, staff

coordinated efforts with the prison, state police, the local hospital and several EMS companies. The officers and inmates were safely and securely transported to the hospital. At the hospital another command post was established to provide security for the inmates involved in the accident.



"All of the exercise drills and training we hold several times a year at the prison really pays off when you are able to successfully handle an incident like this," said SCI Cresson Major Jerry McMahon. "I have always been a believer that if we practice something enough, it becomes automatic. This was proven during this incident."

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Harry graduated with honors from West Virginia University at Morgantown, with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in counseling.

"As you can see from the various jobs she has held in corrections and her educational background, Laurel is a well-rounded and experienced employee," Wetzel said. "I look forward to supporting her in her new role as superintendent of one of our larger state prisons."

As superintendent of SCI Camp Hill, Harry will be responsible for the entire operation of a prison that employs nearly 1,000 individuals, serves as the state's diagnostic and classification center for males entering the state prison system and houses more than 3,600 adult male offenders.

Cresson Inmates Give Back to the Community

The Inmate Betterment Organization at SCI Cresson held a fundraiser earlier this year that positively impacted the community. Selling Krispy Kreme donuts and drinks, the organization raised nearly \$1,000. They added \$700 to the amount raised, bringing the overall total to \$1,700. The funds were donated to the Cresson Food Pantry.

Inmate organizations are approved by the facility administration and efforts are supervised by staff to ensure they are in accordance with DOC policies.

Remembering

In May, employees at SCI Fayette gathered to remember co-workers who have died while employed at the prison. Several years ago a memorial was erected at the prison. It says, "In remembrance of those who were. In appreciation of those who are."



PAWS Program Underway

Earlier this year, SCI Forest staff, in conjunction with the Elk County Humane Society, started an inmate rehabilitative program called Pups Assisting Wounded Soldiers or P.A.W.S.

Five dogs and nine inmates are currently involved in P.A.W.S. The dogs are long-term shelter residents that have been carefully selected for health, age and personality. The dogs will spend 8-12 weeks living with the inmates. A trainer will come to the prison weekly to teach a basic obedience class. Dogs that show promise at the end of their stay at SCI Forest will then be screened for placement by organizations having companion dog programs for veterans with traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Participating inmates are carefully screened for suitability for this program. They are expected to develop an increased sense of responsibility, personal discipline, and social awareness. In most cases, the dogs, who will live and eat with the inmates, will have a primary and secondary inmate handler. The handlers will have full responsibility for all aspects for their dog's life.

All supplies for P.A.W.S., such as dog food, collars and leashes, sleeping crates and toys are covered by the sponsoring shelter and direct donations.

Celebrating 25 Years of Operation



From left to right: Robert Shannon, Joseph Chesney, Robert Collins, Raymond Clymer and Michael Wenerowicz.

Earlier this year, SCI Frackville staff, along with employees from neighboring state prisons, celebrated the prison's 25th anniversary with a luncheon held at the prison. Also invited to celebrate this milestone were state, county and local officials.

Superintendent Robert Collins spoke about the commitment of staff, many of whom reside in Schuylkill County, and about what it takes to provide a safe and secure environment in which to work and live and providing the inmate population with the tools to return to society a better person.

Accepting its first inmates in April 1987, the prison was opened under the direction of Superintendent Raymond Clymer who held that position until April 1993 when he was promoted to executive deputy secretary for the Department of Corrections.

Superintendent Joseph Chesney succeeded Superintendent Clymer from April 1993 through June 2002, when he was re-assigned to SCI Retreat. Superintendent Robert Shannon followed Superintendent Chesney from June 2002 until his retirement in September 2009. Mike Wenerowicz held the position of superintendent from September 2009 through April 2010, when he was promoted to superintendent of SCI Graterford. Frackville's current superintendent, Robert Collins, has been in the position since May 2010.

Throughout its history, SCI Frackville has been committed to being a good neighbor throughout Schuylkill County. For example, the prison's inmate community work detail has completed many projects and continues their work for non-profit organizations and other state agencies. Projects range from picking up litter on county roadways, painting at local fire companies and churches, helping prepare little league fields prior to season openers and repairing garbage cans that help keep community streets clean. Extensive help was provided for the flood zones in the Pine Grove area recently.

SCI Greene Employees Participate in Relay For Life



In May, employees from SCI Greene raised \$10,000 for the American Cancer Society during the Relay for Life Event held at the Waynesburg Central High School Field of Pride in Greene County.

Each year many employees and team members commit to orchestrating this fundraising event and take turns walking laps to keep at least one person on the track at all times. A quilt donated by the Pine Tree Quilt Shop was raffled off along with an official Pittsburgh Penguins jersey donated by AVI Foodsystems. In addition, staff donated valuable time and an assortment of items for the concession stand sales. Chickens were also roasted and sold at the nearby Greene County Fairgrounds. The outcome of this event is always a huge success.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

For the second year in a row, SCI Greensburg inmates this year took first place in the World ERG Rowing challenge that was held from March 15 – April 15, 2012. This challenge involved six inmates spending 5½ hours per day rowing 11,000 meters per hour, which adds up to 60,500 meters per day for 26 days. In the end, each inmate totaled 1,440,000 meters during the challenge.

Two-hundred-fifty-one teams from around the world entered the competition, which was based on average meters rowed per team. SCI Greensburg inmates were number 1 in this category, with all six men ranked in the top eight in the world. The six team members set new world records in all categories for this competition by beating last year's numbers (set by the 2011 team from SCI Greensburg).



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As winners of the competition for 2012, the inmates each received a Concept2 Sports Bag, a water bottle, workout towel, lip balm, Concept2 socks, Concept2 bandana and a seat pad. The institution was also awarded with a Concept2 rowing machine that was placed in the gymnasium for use by the inmate population.

The inmates had a 71 lb. combined weight loss and a 19 percent combined body fat loss during the competition.

This was a great accomplishment for this group of men and their positive attitude and hard work paid off into allowing them to be honored as the World Champion Rowers for 2012.

A brief ceremony was held at the institution on May 23, 2012, and Western Region Deputy Secretary David Pitkins was present and spoke to the six inmates involved. SCI Greensburg Superintendent Joseph Mazurkiewicz also congratulated the inmates on their achievement.



State Rep. Mike Fleck meets Corrections Officer Dale Morgan while touring SCI Huntingdon

Prison Holds Legislative Tour

In May, Pennsylvania State Representative Mike Fleck visited SCI Huntingdon as part of the prison's annual legislative tour. During his visit, Rep. Fleck met with employees to discuss topics and concerns relative to corrections. He was then escorted by Superintendent Tabb Bickell on a tour of the prison.

Leading the Senate in Prayer

In April, Rev. Kirt Anderson, facility chaplaincy program director at SCI Pine Grove and pastor of the West Lebanon Church of God, was the guest of Senator Don White at the capitol. Rev. Anderson, as the senator's guest, opened the state senate session in prayer.

"This was quite an honor for me," Rev. Anderson said. "I would like to thank Senator White and his wonderful staff for taking the time to make me feel at home. I also would like to thank Superintendent Eric Bush for allowing me to represent our prison at the state capitol."

Recognition Program Held for End-of-Life Care Study

"No inmate dies alone," says David Pitkins, deputy secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' Western Region. "This is their family."

For those who work in our state prison system—particularly those who provide care for terminally ill inmates—these eight simple words pack a powerful punch. On May 23, Penn State's School of Nursing and College of Medicine hosted the research group involved in a three-year research study, "Infusing End-of-Life Care Into Complex Organizations: The Prison Study." The study is based on the premise that everyone, including prison inmates, deserves respect and dignity in their final hours and that the culture of complex hierarchical organizations can be reshaped to support these values.

Pennsylvania DOC leaders and officials from the six state correctional institutions that collaborated on the study were on hand at The Nittany Lion Inn on the Penn State University Park campus to speak about their experiences and accept accolades for their participation. Co-researchers from SCI Laurel Highlands were Facility Chaplaincy Program Director Dave Klink, Unit Manager David Link, Infection Control Nurse Paula Sroka and Corrections Officer 1 James Thomas.

"I'm proud of the relationship (that developed) between our researchers and the Department of Corrections," Paula Milone-Nuzzo, dean of the School of Nursing, said. "We all want to believe our research efforts will make a difference, and this one has done exactly that."

"It's gratifying when a collaborative effort such as this one results in sustainable change," Milone-Nuzzo continued. "(This study) will make a difference in the lives—and deaths—of those we serve."

The study, funded by a \$1.27 million grant from the National Institute for Nursing Research, utilized a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to infusing end-of-life care strategies into the prison system. Researchers conducted interviews with more than 200 individuals from the DOC, including leaders from the state office, administrators and front-line staff from the six state correctional institutions involved in the study, and prison society volunteers. Also interviewed were inmate participants such as those providing end-of-life care, those receiving end-of-life care and/or those suffering from chronic health conditions but not yet at the end of life.

Findings from these interviews were used to develop a "Toolkit For Enhancing End-of-Life Care" that prisons anywhere can use. Prison employees served as co-researchers on the project and were responsible for guiding the content of the toolkit in order to meet their prioritized needs. They had the opportunity to implement and provide feedback on the proposed intervention strategies before the toolkit was finalized.

The program received enthusiastic praise from the participating institutions. "Compassion is a major component of our facility, and we are already reaping the benefits of this initiative,"

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Trevor Wingard, superintendent of SCI Laurel Highlands, says. “(Our inmates deserve) a humane existence and that includes a humane end of life.”

Janice Penrod, professor of nursing and one of the principal investigators on the project, says the next step is to pursue additional funding to continue the project with an emphasis on refining the toolkit and disseminating it more broadly.

“This project has demonstrated translational research in action,” Penrod said. “We adapted the best science in end-of-life care to meet the identified needs and constraints of prison settings. We carefully infused the toolkit through a team of highly committed co-researchers. The outcomes have been phenomenal—these organizations have expressed a dramatic culture change that embraces supportive care at the end of life.”

Susan J. Loeb, associate professor of nursing and a principal investigator, added, “It is my belief that applying tools to enhance end-of-life care in correctional settings not only will lessen the suffering of those who will die behind bars, but also holds potential for improving prison community relations and morale. It demonstrates that humane death is achievable even within the harsh environment of prison.”

Christopher S. Hollenbeak, professor of surgery and health evaluation sciences in Penn State’s College of Medicine, is the third principal investigator on the project, serving in the role of health economist.

In addition to Laurel Highlands, the participating correctional institutions were SCIs Dallas, Graterford, Greene, Muncy and Waymart.

Facilities Continue to Empower Employees

Continuing the department’s efforts to empower employees by providing work-related educational workshops and networking opportunities, several state prisons held empowerment symposiums earlier this year.

In June, SCI Graterford hosted a symposium with the theme of “One Mission, One Goal, One Team.” Attended by approximately 100 employees from several institutions within the eastern region, workshops covered issues such as religious diversity, having a positive attitude, Parole 101, tactical communication, body language, bullying and a robotics demonstration from the Montgomery County Bomb Squad.

SCI Pittsburgh, in May, also held a symposium. Nearly 200 employees attended workshops held in the prison’s school. Guest speakers from the FBI, PA State Police, Pittsburgh Police and SCI Pittsburgh presented workshops on serial killers, body language, inmate manipulation, gangs, stress management, use of force and hostage survival.

Fall symposiums will be held at SCIs Cambridge Springs, Dallas, Huntingdon, Laurel Highlands and Mahanoy.

Congratulations Are In Order!

Congratulations to employees at **Allentown and Scranton CCCs**. Each facility recently passed its American Correctional Association (ACA) audit achieving 100% mandatory score and 100% non-mandatory score.

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Congratulations to **SCI Laurel Highlands** employees for achieving reaccreditation with 100% compliance on mandatory standards and 99.55% on non-mandatory standards during their most-recent ACA reaccreditation audit!

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Congratulations to **SCI Waymart** staff for also achieving reaccreditation from the ACA. The facility achieved 100% compliance with 62 mandatory standards and 99% compliance with 439 non-mandatory standards.

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Congratulations to employees of the following facilities: **SCIs Chester, Coal Township, Cresson, Graterford, Houtzdale, Laurel Highlands, Pine Grove, Fayette and Forest.**

These nine facilities all achieved 100 percent compliance on all mandatory and non-mandatory standards during their most recent audit by the Corrections Education Association. Additional information on this accomplishment will be featured in a future issue of this newsletter.



Celebrating SCI Waymart's accomplishment, from left to right, are: Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal; Superintendent Assistant Joe Vinansky; Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services Paul Delrosso; Corrections Secretary John Wetzel; Superintendent Wayne Gavin; Program Manager Laura Banta; Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management Ronda Ellett; and Major of the Guard Ed Kosciuk.

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are working on improving our system and having those improvements reduce future crime. A side benefit of that is that we hope to see a reduction, over time, in our state prison inmate population. If that happens, you'll see a reduction in the amount of money necessary to operate the DOC."

Wetzel urges everyone to stay tuned as this is just the beginning of an historic shift in the corrections continuum.