



Introduction

Massachusetts
Department of Correction

Carol Higgins O'Brien
Commissioner

FY16

1st Quarter

Gap Analysis

Report

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The Massachusetts Department of Correction's (MA DOC) vision is to effect positive behavioral change in order to eliminate violence, victimization, and recidivism. Motivating and recommending offenders to participate and complete evidence based programs is one of the many strategies the MA DOC utilizes to effect positive behavioral change. In order for the MA DOC to make informed decisions and document progress towards this vision, a **gap** analysis was implemented for measuring and reporting offenders' participation in evidence based programs.

This analysis captures our programming gaps, provides programming benchmarks for strategic planning, promotes transparency, and creates a roadmap for efficiently managing resources. Additionally, programming outcomes within this report support the performance measures outlined in the MA DOC Classification, Programs, and Reentry Performance Based Plan. Thus, this report leads to the develop of numerous strategies to improve programming outcomes and reduce programming gaps, such as re-allocating resources, maximizing program capacity, and creating a culture of program compliance via the Program Engagement Strategy*1.

In regards to the MA DOC's programming processes, the department conducts a risk assessment on male criminally sentenced offenders that are serving a minimum of one year and are not sentenced to life without parole. Offenders who score moderate-to-high risk to recidivate on their risk assessment are eligible for a needs assessment. An offender's needs assessment scores identify criminogenic need areas that should be addressed with corresponding evidence based programming prior to release in order to reduce the likelihood of recidivating.

Therefore, offenders with a substance abuse, anger, or criminal thinking need are recommended for the Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA) Program, Violence Reduction Program, Criminal Thinking Program, respectively. This report will illustrate the MA DOC's progress towards promoting positive behavioral change by means of programming prior to an offender's release.

*1- Program Engagement Strategy is a tool piloted at MCI-Concord, MCI- Norfolk, and NCCI-Gardner that employs a balanced approach of incentives and consequences to increase program participation and decrease refusals and terminations. For example, offenders that refuse to participate in recommended programming may lose privileges, such as preferred housing, employment, and seniority date.

Releases to the Street *2:

From July 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015, a total of 414 male offenders released to the street from MA DOC custody that began this admission as a new court commitment*3. Seventy-nine percent (n=328) of releases completed a needs assessment, and were recommended for programming based on their corresponding criminogenic need areas. The following analysis depicts this release cohort’s progress towards addressing their criminogenic needs prior to release back to their communities.

Methodology:

Offenders may have multiple outcomes for a specific program due to being recommended for a program until it is completed. For example, an offender may initially refuse to participate in a program; however, on a subsequent program recommendation decide to enroll and go on to complete a program. Therefore, a hierarchy of program outcomes has been established to measure the highest level of participation an offender has achieved during their incarceration. Each offender’s highest program outcome within the hierarchy below is reflected in the following tables for each program.

Program Outcome Hierarchy:

- Completed Program
- Participated
- Terminated Unsuccessfully
- Refused to Participate
- Accepted
- Ineligible
- Program not Available
- No recommendation/No recommendation outcome/Pending override approval (POA)*4

The **gap** is the percentage of offenders **who did not complete or participate** corresponding core programming to a need area prior to their release:

gap = 100% - (% Completed Program + % Participated in Program).

The total sum of eligible offenders is based upon the sum of offenders with a corresponding need (i.e., substance abuse, anger, or criminal thinking) and those with a program override entry. *5

*2- A release to street occurs when an inmate is released from the custody of the Massachusetts Department of Correction by way of parole or discharge to the street. Conditions warranting a release to street include: parole, good conduct discharge, and expiration of sentence.

*3- Individuals committed by the courts to the Massachusetts Department of Correction as a result of a criminal offense. Therefore, this analysis excludes offenders who were re-admitted and subsequently released.

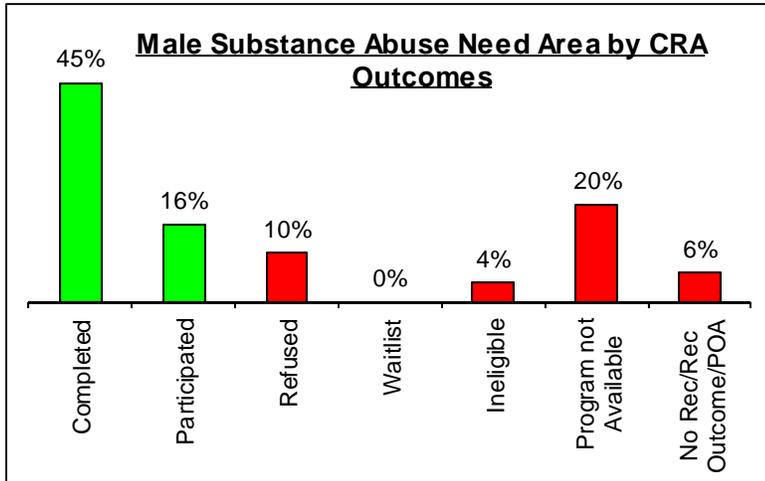
*4- Incomplete program recommendations due to an offender obtaining an early release via parole, or being transferred before a recommendation can be completed at one’s prior facility.

*5- Occurs when an offender does not score moderate to high risk for a criminogenic need area based on their needs assessment, and a program recommendation is formulated by their Correctional Program Officer (CPO) due to evidence that the offender can benefit from participating in such a program.



Gap Analysis:

Chart 1: Male Substance Abuse Need Area by Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA) Outcomes

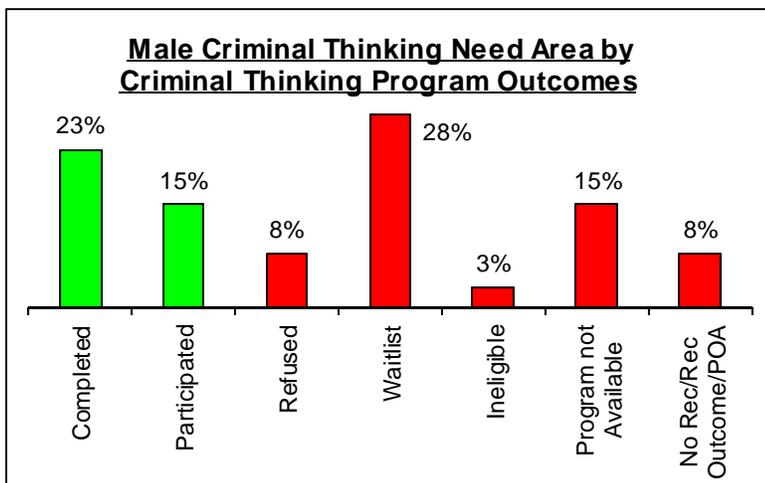


CRA Program

Outcomes:

- **39% gap**
- **61%** completed or participated in programming
- **20%** released without being housed in a facility that offered CRA programming
- **10%** of eligible offenders refused to participate in programming

Chart 2: Male Criminal Thinking Need Area by Criminal Thinking Program Outcomes



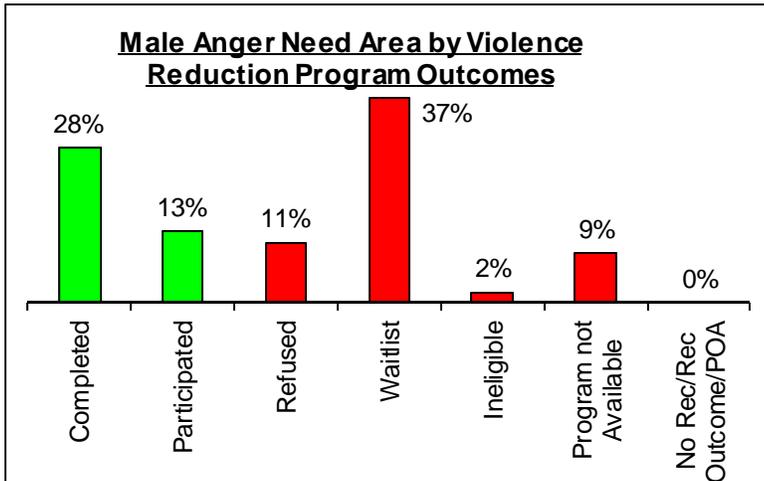
Criminal Thinking Program

Outcomes:

- **62% gap**
- **38%** completed or participated in programming
- **15%** released without being housed in a facility that offered Criminal Thinking Program, and an additional **28%** released on the waitlist



Chart 3: Male Anger Need Area by Violence Reduction Program Outcomes



Violence Reduction Program

Outcomes:

- **59% gap**
- **41%** completed or participated in programming
- **9%** released without being housed in a facility that offered Violence Reduction Program, and an additional **37%** released on the waitlist
- **11%** of eligible offenders refused to participate in programming

Conclusion:

As evidenced within this report and the Classification, Programs, and Reentry Performance Based Plan, the MA DOC has implemented a performance based approach to provide appropriate programming for offenders. This report provides historical benchmarking for program outcomes, which is extremely beneficial as it correlates the effect strategies have on closing the programming gaps.

For example, significant progress has been made over the course of the last fiscal year with reducing program declines. In order to reduce the number of offenders declining programs, the Program Engagement Strategy was implemented as a tool for creating a culture of program compliance within an institution. Since this strategy has been put into practice, program declines have decreased for substance abuse programming from 15% in FY14 to 13% in FY15 and they continue to decline as evidenced within this report (10%).

In addition, strategies are being implemented to reduce releases with Anger and Criminal Thinking Program needs with the program not available and waitlist outcome. These strategies entail maximizing resources, re-allocating resources to facilities with a greater need of the programming resource, as well as re-allocating staff to instruct these programs, which are evidence based and have a greater impact on reducing recidivism. Future Gap Analysis reports will detail the impact of these strategies on reducing the Criminal Thinking and Violence Reduction programming gaps.



GAP ANALYSIS REPORT INFORMATION

Risk Assessment- Tool utilized by the MA DOC to identify offenders who are moderate to high risk to reoffend and prioritize them for programming.

Need Assessment- Tool utilized by the MA DOC to place offenders in the appropriate programs that will aid in their reentry to society, and will most likely reduce the offender's chance of reoffending.

Program Override Entry- Occurs when an offender does not score moderate to high risk for a criminogenic need area based on their needs assessment, and a program recommendation is formulated by their Correctional Program Officer (CPO) due to evidence that the offender can benefit from participating in such a program.

Correctional Recovery Academy (CRA) - is an intensive skill-based residential substance abuse treatment program located at four institutions with a capacity of 528 beds. The CRA targets substance abuse and relapse prevention. The program utilizes rolling admissions and combines the elements of a therapeutic community's social learning approach with an advanced cognitive behavioral curriculum. *This component of treatment is available at MCI-Concord, MCI Norfolk, MCI Shirley Medium and MCI Shirley Minimum.*

Criminal Thinking Program- is designed to focus on altering the pro-criminal thinking patterns that have been identified as separating those who are serious repeat offenders from those who are not. The program focuses specifically on criminal sentiments and how to develop pro-social alternatives for them. The program assists the offender in developing pro-social alternatives to past activities and associates. *This program is available at MCI-Concord, MCI- Norfolk, MCI-Shirley Medium, MCI-Shirley Minimum, and Souza Baranowski Correctional Center.*

Violence Reduction Program- targets cognitions that contribute to violent behavior. The goals of the program are to decrease violent behavior and the likelihood of institutional disturbances. During the program inmates identify the specific cognitions which have led to their violent behavior. Once identified, they are taught pro-social strategies and skills to diminish the likelihood of continued violence. The program is facilitated by staff two to three times per week. *This program is available at MCI Concord, Souza Baranowski Correctional Center, MCI-Plymouth, MCI Norfolk, MCI-Shirley Medium, MCI-Shirley Minimum, Old Colony Correctional Center Minimum Unit and Pondville Correctional Center.*

Substance Abuse Need- Offenders with a score from 3 to 10 on their needs assessment for substance abuse need area.

Substance Abuse Total Number Eligible- The sum of offenders with a substance abuse need, and those with a program recommendation override.

Criminal Thinking Need- Offenders with a score from 6 to 10 on their needs assessment for criminal thinking need area.

Criminal Thinking Total Number Eligible- The sum of offenders with a criminal thinking need, and those with a program recommendation override.

Anger Need- Offenders with a score from 5 to 10 on their needs assessment for anger need area.

Anger Total Number Eligible- The sum of offenders with an anger need, and those with a program recommendation override.

Completed Program- Outcome issued when an offender satisfactorily completed the program.

Participated- Outcome issued when an offender participates in a program, but does not complete the program. The offender was either enrolled in the program upon transfer to another facility or released.

Terminated Unsuccessfully- Outcome issued when an offender participates in a program, but does not complete the program due to various circumstances.

Refused to Participate- Outcome issued when an offender refuses to participate in programming.

Waitlist- Outcome issued when an offender accepts a program recommendation and is on the waitlist for programming.

Ineligible- Outcome issued when an offender has the need for corresponding programming, but is unable to participate in programming due to various reasons, such as length of time left to serve, or housing unit.

Program not Available- Outcome issued when an offender has the criminogenic need for programming; however, the program is not available at their facility.

Pending Override Approval (POA)/no recommendation outcome/no recommendation- Incomplete program recommendations, due to an offender obtaining an early release via parole, or being transferred before a recommendation can be completed at one's prior facility.



This brief was written and prepared by Reentry and Program Services Division.

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