

1 DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAID SERVICES
2 PERSONS RETURNING TO SOCIETY FROM INCARCERATION
3 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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14 November 14, 2024
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23 Stefanie Sweet, CVR, RCP-M
24 Certified Verbatim Reporter
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A P P E A R A N C E S

TAC Members:

- Steve Shannon, Chair
- James Daley
- Shawn Ryan
- Shannon Smith-Stephens
- Brandon Harley
- Adrienne Bush
- Van Ingram
- Casey Michalovic
- Kristen Porter
- Kevin Sharkey
- Angela Darcy
- Nathan Thomas

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MS. BICKERS: Good morning.

This is Erin with the Department of Medicaid. It is not quite 9 o'clock and we are still clearing out the waiting room so we will give it just a few minutes before we get started.

It is 9 o'clock and the waiting room is clear. I only currently have Steve, Kristen, and Van on. Did I miss any TAC members logging in?

MR. SHANNON: I don't think so. That's what I have.

MS. BICKERS: If you like, we can give it a moment longer to see if we get a few more.

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MR. SHANNON: We need a lot more, right?

MS. BICKERS: Yes.

MR. SHANNON: We can do that.

MS. BICKERS: We can give it a minute longer and then if we don't have others join we can go ahead and start, and Kelli and I can keep an eye out for anybody who joins to get a quorum.

MS. DARCY: Hey, I'm here. Angela Darcy.

MR. SHANNON: Hi, Angela.

MS. BICKERS: Thank you, Angela. You just show up as iPhone.

MS. DARCY: Sorry.

MS. BICKERS: That's okay. Dr. Schuster always shows up with an incognito name and I can never catch her coming in, so no worries.

Our new member is logging in, Steve.

MR. SHANNON: Okay, good.

MS. BICKERS: Here comes Brandon and Kevin. Okay. It looks like everybody is starting to filter in. Give them just

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a second to get connected.

The waiting room is clear and I counted seven so we should be good.

MR. SHANNON: Okay. Let's go ahead and get started. If you are on the TAC, your camera needs to be on.

Right, Erin?

MS. BICKERS: Yes, while we vote, yes, please.

MR. SHANNON: I would like to welcome Nathan Thomas. He is filling the spot of a formerly incarcerated individual who is a former or current Medicaid recipient, appointed by Mental Health of America of Kentucky.

If you see his name, he will get his camera turned on briefly, right, Nathan?

MR. THOMAS: Sorry, Steve. I was dealing with something.

MR. SHANNON: No problem.

MR. THOMAS: I apologize about that. Did you ask me a question?

MR. SHANNON: Just turn your camera on. You are solid. Do you want to

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briefly introduce yourself?

MR. THOMAS: Yes. I am Nathan Thomas. I am an Outreach Coordinator. I am 40 years old. I don't really know what else to say.

I have been incarcerated on a few occasions and I have a lot of lived experience with many things that we will be discussing, so I am super grateful to be here and be apart of this.

MR. SHANNON: All right. Glad you are here. We have a quorum. Let's take action on our minutes from our September 12 meeting that was sent out. Can I have a motion on the minutes?

MS. DARCY: I will motion, Angela Darcy.

MR. SHANNON: And a second?

MR. INGRAM: I'll second, Van Ingram.

MR. SHANNON: Thank you. All in favor, signify by saying aye.

TAC MEMBERS: Aye.

MR. SHANNON: Opposed and abstentions?

1 All right. As for the real
2 business that we have. Next, we have
3 Kristen Porter who will do a presentation
4 on DOC.

5 We have had a lot of
6 conversations and she has offered to get
7 us all up to speed on the things that DOC
8 is doing that relates to reentry. I think
9 we have touched upon them at different
10 times so this will be an opportunity.

11 There is a PowerPoint and of
12 course, I sent it out and it is all good.
13 So you have a copy of that and as everyone
14 does with everything they do, Document,
15 PowerPoint, there are tweaks and tweaks,
16 so there is a version 2.0 that will be
17 sent out as well.

18 I suspect what you have is going
19 to be more than enough information to move
20 forward.

21 MS. PORTER: Absolutely.

22 MR. SHANNON: Go ahead, Kristen.
23 You can share your screen.

24 MS. PORTER: That's what I was
25 going to say. If I can share my screen,

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give me one second. Let me get this going. You can let me know if I am good.

MR. SHANNON: You are good.

MS. PORTER: Good morning, everyone. I am excited to really talk this morning from the Kentucky Department of Correction's perspective.

If I have not met you, I am Kristen Porter, the Director of the Division of Reentry Services. It is really nice to be here this morning, really nice to be here with everyone, and really be able to inform you at a higher level some of the things that we do to prepare people for release from incarceration.

But really, not just that. I am going to give you some statistics and some numbers. That way, this group can think big picture and see the system that the Department of Corrections really has that we deal with every day.

Let's go through. At the Department of Corrections, we really have to do two different things. So we've got

1 our mission statement. I am not going to
2 read it to you. We are all educated here.
3 It is twofold.

4 We have to protect the
5 Commonwealth, obviously. We are in the
6 business of housing people that in some
7 instances have done wrong in society.

8 But the second thing, is we are
9 not in the business -- is my screen still
10 sharing?

11 MR. SHANNON: Yes.

12 MS. PORTER: Okay, thank you.

13 We aren't in the business at
14 that point -- everyone has already been
15 sentenced by the time they get to us -- so
16 at that point, the second job is also
17 providing opportunities to all of the
18 people who are under the charge, whether
19 they are incarcerated, whether they are in
20 the community, to make sure that they are
21 going to be successful when they are done
22 with the Department of Corrections.
23 Whatever done looks like for us.

24 Just to start off and give you
25 some statistics to let you know what we

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look like. In Kentucky, we are a little unique. If you don't know that, we are only one of a couple of states in the United States that houses half of our state inmate population in our county jails.

So we have 14 state prisons. There are 77 county jails throughout the state, but we house inmates at 74 of them. So we have inmates housed at almost 90 different locations in the state of Kentucky, and if you could just imagine that, in and of itself, without getting into any other issues that can cause a lot of issues, their just trying to provide consistent services in the Department of Corrections.

State population-wise, when you look at state inmates, when you think of county jails, you have to think that there are other inmates in the county jails too. There are county inmates as well. So we are only talking about state population here.

Overall, these numbers are as of
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October 21st, for the record. We had 19,141 state inmates in the state of Kentucky. The way that our population looks if you break it down, 67 percent of those were housed in our state prisons, so across the 14 locations throughout the state.

Thirty-three percent of those were in our jails. So a smaller population in our jails versus our prisons, but in a minute we will talk about what releases look like and you will see that turn flip when we talk about jails versus prisons as well.

When we talk Department of Corrections in the state of Kentucky, we have our incarcerated population, but we also have our community population, probation and parole that is supervised in the Department of Corrections. Sometimes in other states that is different, but in Kentucky that is also in the Department of Corrections.

So there are 62,871 people that are under the supervision under some sort

1 of level of supervision with the Division
2 of Probation and Parole, so that means the
3 Division of Probation and Parole has an
4 obligation to ensure that those
5 individuals are meeting the regulations
6 that the judge has ordered them to do, or
7 the parole board has ordered them to do,
8 while they are on supervision in the
9 community.

10 48,840 of them are active. And
11 what the difference between those two
12 numbers mean, just for this group to
13 understand is there is a point in
14 someone's supervision out in the community
15 to where you can do good and work your way
16 down off of supervision to be on inactive
17 supervision.

18 To where you are still under
19 supervision, just inactive supervision, to
20 where they are not -- the PMP officers are
21 not actively coming to your home, you are
22 not having to report in to the office all
23 of the time, but you are still under the
24 authority of probation and parole, but
25 they are not actively seeing you all of

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the time, once every month or once every three months, or anything like that.

MR. SHANNON: What is the difference between probation and parole?

MS. PORTER: Absolutely. That's a good question, Steve.

If you are on parole, the easiest way to think about it is if you are on parole, you have really stepped foot in an incarcerated setting.

In probation, the majority of the time -- I can't say all the time, because there are shock probation instances, but shock probation most of the time you may have served a small jail sentence while your case has been pending, but you didn't go and serve any length of time in a state prison.

So for parole, the parole board has sentencing authority over the cases so they determine what your regulations, what your conditions are that you have to follow while you are under supervision with the Department of Corrections.

For probation, a judge -- one of

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the Circuit Court or District Court judges determines that.

MR. SHANNON: Okay.

MS. PORTER: So there are a lot of individuals. Between 19,000 that are out in the community. It's a big charge the Department of Corrections has in the state.

Unfortunately, out of the 50 states, Kentucky is high in comparison just for overall incarceration, if you compare us to other states. We are high in comparison to female-specific incarceration, which is a little unique in comparison to states, and then also high in current or previous incarcerated parents.

So those are just some facts that are good for this group to know, because that shows some of the needs of our population.

If you look back to last year when you look at the releases, we released 14,730 individuals from custody. So a lot of individuals were released from custody.

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Most of those, when I said earlier you will see the numbers reverse, the jail did the majority of the releases. So the majority of people that are being released every year are coming out of the jails.

That doesn't mean the prisons don't release any, but of the 14,730 releases in 2023, 11,588 of them came from a jail; 3,142 came from a prison.

So that, in and of itself, shows you that the cyclical population in the state of Kentucky is your jail population. They are the people who are coming into the system and going out of the system at a rapid pace. So those are the people that really need a lot of attention.

You will see, if you know anything about me for those who have met me, you know I will talk about the great things that we do and the gaps. So you will see some gaps that we have with these numbers, so keep that in mind throughout this.

For our state prisons, Roederer Correctional Complex, Eastern Kentucky

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Correctional Complex, Northport Training Center did our highest release numbers in 2023.

But of our facilities, Kentucky State Reformatory and Kentucky Correctional Institute for Women did our most challenging releases. And what I mean by that is we have people with high medical needs, high mental health needs, high substance use needs, that are hard to place. We can't find a place to even have them lay their head.

If you are on this call, you will hear me say that DOC needs help with a placement, please help. Nine out of ten of these individuals are coming from those two facilities.

In the Department of Corrections, just to walk you through the process of what it looks like, reentry is beginning at day one. When someone is entering into the correctional system, everybody gets a presentence investigation report that shows people and all the caseworkers throughout someone's time

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while they are working with the Department of Corrections.

The probation and parole officers, the reentry coordinators, everyone that works that shows everybody a brief snapshot of the history of that individual at the time of sentencing. The biggest person it shows is obviously the judge as well. So that is an informative document that the judge sees to consider at the time of sentencing. It is a snapshot of who that individual is at that time. It is basic identity information, but it is also education level, it is family, it is prior criminal history, it goes through all kinds of aspects of them.

After they have that, they get sentenced and they come in to the correctional system, there is an orientation, they get classified. The classification includes getting them in to a proper housing unit. They get work and program assignments and then they get an assigned custody level.

There is an assessment system

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that is based off of different factors.
They get assigned a different custody
level. So some people can be minimum
custody, medium custody, maximum custody.

Our prisons throughout the state
are different custody levels, so that
determines what prison they get housed at.
Some people think if they are from this
area why did you move them all the way
across the state? Sometimes the answer
is, unfortunately, as basic as their
custody level will determine that.
Sometimes that's what you have to do when
you factor all of those things in.

There is a medical, dental, and
mental health screening that is done to
see what needs are occurring while
somebody is incarcerated.

There is a permanent housing
assignment that happens, because what will
end up happening is we will try to have
somebody permanently assigned in a state
prison. Every prison does have different
unique programs and job opportunities.
Our population does have the opportunity

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to apply for a different program if they need it or want it and request a transfer to a different location. So that is an option too.

They get a risk and needs assessment to determine their risk to reoffend and what needs they have while incarcerated. And when you think needs, we are thinking criminal thinking needs, what programs we can do, what activities we could help them participate in while they are incarcerated to really change that criminal behavior and mindset. Maybe it is anger management, maybe it is parenting classes. Something along those lines to really help.

They have a reentry case plan that dictates and really kinds of goes through and lists what the program requirements would be, what activity assignments, what work assignments would be, and then throughout all of that we are leading up to release preparation, and then ultimately out on community supervision if they continue with the

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Department of Corrections.

Some people serve their time out when they leave us and they do not continue with supervision when they leave the Department of Corrections.

What we found several years ago is, about 2015 or 2016, Kentucky was at an all time high for recidivism. We were at about 45, 47, something like that, percent and that was the highest that we had ever been.

So we started with House Bill 463, if you have been around for awhile, with some efforts trying to change some things, but it wasn't happening fast enough, frankly. So we needed to make a lot more changes.

February 1st, 2018, the Division of Reentry was established. At that point, what we needed in the Department of Corrections was dedicated staff who it wasn't someone's sad job.

I've worked in the Department of Corrections for almost 19 years now. My very first job was a correctional officer

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at Luther Lockett Correctional Complex. I was a probation and parole officer out in the community. I was a supervisor with probation and parole in the community. I came into Central Office later.

In my positions that I carried throughout the state leading up to before 2018, if in all of those positions you wanted to do reentry efforts as working in the Department of Corrections, it was because you wanted to and it was because it was -- if you have time you can teach this portal class to try and help people, or if you have the heart for it, or if you have the passion for it. Some of us did.

I went into Roederer Correctional Complex as a probation and parole officer and taught prerelease classes. I facilitated extra classes, but those were in addition to my job duties that I got evaluated on to make sure I did those.

So we didn't, before February 1st, 2018, have dedicated staff whose job was reentry. So February 1st came along

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and we established a specific division in 2018 to solely focus on reentry efforts to really try to change and make a difference that it is not a sad job and someone has to start focusing on teaching classes, expanding program opportunities, focusing on release efforts.

As of today, we have 85 staff reporting to the same division. I will go back really quick. Those numbers that we talked about here, 19,000 inmates, 50,000 almost in the community, 85 staff, there is a struggle there. There is a struggle there. We will talk about a lot of the struggles there that we have today. Everything we are doing isn't perfect. It is not at all, but we have come a long way and there is still a long way to go for sure.

Now we have 85 staff reporting to the same division. We have worked to try to standardize release processes. If you were being released from one prison on one side of the state of Kentucky to the other side of the state of Kentucky it

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will look the same versus how it did
several years ago.

You used to maybe have a warden
who was more reentry minded and would
maybe give someone sweats to walk out with
instead of having to walk out with khakis,
and then everyone in the community knew
where you got released from. Something as
small as that to where immediately when
you walk out of prison you still have a
label on your face.

Now trying to make sure the
release processes are standardized, we put
reentry training into every basic academy
where every probation and parole officer
is now trained through a lot of reentry
efforts by our own division as well and
every correctional officer.

We created events to start
happening. Lots and lots of different
collaborations over the years. We have
expanded programs we will talk about.
Expanded resources, and we really started
working with a lot of community partners.

This is what we look like in a

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nutshell. I know you will get this PowerPoint so I will not go too far into this, but we are broken down to where those 85 staff oversee every staff. We have staff in every state prison, every community probation and parole office.

I only have seven staff that cover 19 jails. Those jails have a substance use program that is DOC contracted and those positions are KORE funded. We are so gracious to -- so thankful to have those positions, but there are 74 jails that people get released from, so DOC does not have staffing to help with some of those jails to do those releases. So that is a huge barrier that we currently face right now.

What do we do specifically in the division of reentry? In a nutshell, we attend community resource meetings, try to gather resources to bring back to the population, we do employment connections to connect employment, we educate employers on the benefits of being a second chance employer, we do referrals to

1 adult education to do continuing education
2 services in the community post release, we
3 maintain clothing closets and food
4 pantries because sometimes the basic needs
5 that people need. People always think
6 that everybody needs an ID and yes, they
7 do, but sometimes people need to eat to
8 live and sometimes it is the basic needs
9 that people need, so we are maintaining
10 clothing closets and food pantries.

11 We are facilitating reentry
12 programming. Those are life skill
13 classes, cognitive behavioral therapy
14 classes, focusing on criminal thinking,
15 those are in person and virtual options.

16 We monitor certificate of
17 employability to make sure that employees
18 know -- we at the Department of
19 Corrections will give a certificate
20 signing our name to a person saying that
21 they were good while they were with us,
22 would you please hire them. That is what
23 a certificate of employability is. So we
24 are doing that as well.

25 Coordinate KyRAS trainings.

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KyRAS is what we use in the Department of Corrections to determine someone's risk level and what needs they have. Maintain course catalogs, screen new programs.

There is always a newer, better, most recent version of the newest reentry program is out there that someone wants the Department of Corrections to review and they are amazing nine times out of ten and our division is the ones that do that.

We review all of the new programs. We represent at all of the reentry councils when we can. We have, of course, 55 probation and parole offices in the state. So I do have staff that work in the offices. There are 20 reentry coordinators in the offices. So there are 20 probation and parole districts, and I have one in every office. So they monitor all 55 offices.

We do the reentry programming, we do release planning for the 14 prisons and 19 jails, we monitor pro board hearings. The pro board conducts the hearings, but someone has to sit in the

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hearings while they are happening to know what is going on with them and our staff is doing that.

We host and/or cohost events with community partners and then we do lots of initiatives that we will talk about too.

Different types of programs that we facilitate. We do evidenced-based programs -- these are programs where there is evidence behind them to show that they are effective in changing behavior and reducing recidivism.

We have promising practices programs that -- it makes sense, in theory it is going to change behavior, but there is not a full amount of evidence there.

There are life skills programs in the Department of Corrections that shows that there are barriers that need to be removed. It is basically your daily needs, being able to teach people that time management, and money, and technology, communication, and all of those things.

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And then, there are religious programs as well. So those are the four different types of programs that we have in the Department of Corrections that we facilitate and monitor.

Just to give you a brief snapshot of a lot of programs. We have an entire Department of Corrections course catalog. Someone will say, "What kind of programs do you offer.?"

Oh my goodness, there's a ton. There are so many different types of programs that we offer. It is all kinds. There are vocational programs, you can see auto tech is on there, there's masonry, there's different types of things that people can learn skills to be able to have once they are released. There are substance use programs, there are sex offender programs, there are educational programs, so there are a variety of programs.

There are challenges with our programs. There is a program called Challenges, but there are challenges with

1 our programs too, because we do struggle
2 in hiring qualified facilitators and
3 teachers for a lot of our programs as
4 well. So sometimes you will see that we
5 could have a program being offered in the
6 Department of Corrections, but the teacher
7 will sit vacant for some time because of
8 the wages that we are able to pay. So
9 that is a challenge that we have at the
10 Department of Corrections, sometimes,
11 being able to fulfill those positions to
12 keep those programs going for the
13 population.

14 We were super excited about
15 House Bill 284, because that gave us the
16 opportunity to expand programming to our
17 community population.

18 Before House Bill 284, if you
19 don't really know a lot about our
20 programs, our programs are amazing because
21 our population gets a lot from our
22 programs and it also helps them change
23 their mindset and their thinking and
24 really their life.

25 However, sometimes people only

1 want to take a program because also a lot
2 of times, people get good time credit for
3 completing our programs. I don't care why
4 someone completes a program. If you're
5 going to sit in a program only because you
6 want the time off of your sentence, that
7 is fine. You are still going to pick up
8 something from that. You can't tell me
9 you are going to sit in a six-month class
10 and not hear something that is going to
11 stay in your head. So we do afford 30,
12 60, or 90 days of good time credit for
13 completing a program.

14 So House Bill 284 in 2020
15 expanded that process to allow judges in
16 the community to also award good time off
17 of probationers sentences as well. Before
18 that, it was all of our parolees. So that
19 allowed people who were in the community
20 to really start being able to reduce their
21 sentence and get equal opportunity for
22 that, and it also allowed us in the
23 Department of Corrections to leverage that
24 and be able to do community MOUs, to have
25 different committees come in and be

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trained under the Department of Corrections in our programs to facilitate the way that we facilitate programs for consistent delivery of programs, and make sure that the staff is eligible and have certificates to facilitate.

The community partners enter in to a nonfinancial MOU with the Department of Corrections. They will also facilitate our programs for us for the population. So being able to do this and the expansion of our division, if you look down at the bottom right-hand of the screen and look at the number of program completions from 2017 to 2023 and look at that difference, just under 7,000 to almost 35,000 there. That is huge.

And if you don't believe in reentry and you think that people did wrong and they need to serve their time, but you are a money person, if that is what drives you, then this is your slide to focus on.

If someone gets 90 days off of their sentence and it costs \$1.23 to

1 incarcerate someone -- let's not quote me
2 on that, because I can't remember exactly
3 what it is, but it's a little bit over a
4 dollar, something like that depending on
5 what location you are on. You do the math
6 on your own because I did not come here as
7 a math wizard. But look at how much money
8 we are saving the state just by the
9 program extension.

10 So if that is what drives you is
11 money, then this is your slide that you
12 want to focus on.

13 So where do releases come from
14 in the Department of Corrections?
15 Fourteen state prisons, 74 county jails,
16 we do also have people who leave
17 incarceration from our prisons and our
18 jails sometimes and go to Recovery
19 Kentucky Centers for inpatient substance
20 use treatment, but also Reentry Service
21 Centers, which is really what we call
22 halfway houses, formally known as halfway
23 houses.

24 There are 13 Recovery Kentucky
25 Centers and 20 Reentry Service Centers in

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the state. We cut the difference between the two, Recovery Kentucky Centers has treatment, and Reentry Service Centers, they are going there for a stay because they need another place to stay eventually. So it is basically a temporary housing.

We continue to -- when we are trying to prepare someone for release, we are focused on all of these things. Home placement is a given. Someone has to have a place to live, but we are trying to make sure that people are being released with 30 days of medication.

Mental health and medical appointments, coordinating insurance, which we obviously work with all of the MCOs that are on here. Identification documentation, ID, birth certificates, Social Security card.

Resource connectivity, we release people with what we call a district snapshot or a community resource manual, and that is a resource packet for whatever area they are going into the

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state that lists a lot of different resources in the community they are going to.

Employment transportation we know is a huge barrier and we will talk about that in a second.

Continuing education, clothing, and programs. In May of this year, we started utilizing this reentry needs checklist for all releases that are leaving a prison. This was to ensure that people weren't being missed in several different categories. Sometimes we weren't having all of our entities in a prison.

When you think of a prison, I try to tell people think of it as a mini city. You have your mayor of education, your mayor of substance use, your mayor of reentry. All of these mayors need to talk before the person leaves the city to make sure they are leaving this city to move to another city. That is how we have to run our prisons, like a little city. We have to be able to support everyone in it.

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We wanted to make sure to use this checklist to make sure that we weren't missing anything for the releases. So this started in May.

Once someone is released, they can be released and be totally done with supervision. So sometimes when they are totally done with supervision, we will connect with different community entities, whether that is our partners at the education and labor cabinet, with the local career centers, ak(?) services, behavioral health, different community reentry networks. We partner with Goodwill a lot, we partner with life learning centers, different entities like that across the state to really continue that relationship for someone at the time of release.

If someone is continuing on supervision with the Department of Corrections, then these things happen with the Department of Corrections staff.

They continue with the risk and needs assessment, they have a reentry case

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plan, there is continued programming out in the community that is available to them, there is a client portal application that they can utilize on their phone as well, to check in with their probation officer for technology, and check in on their progress of supervision.

We have transportation assistance, which we are so, so thankful to have. Funded by our own Van Ingram here on the call through the Office of Drug Control Policy.

Just over this year as well we have done over 17,000 rides, so transportation is one of our biggest barriers for our population.

People want to be successful when they leave. They really do. They want to go to their treatment, they want to see their probation officer, they want to go to continuing mental health appointments, education assessments. Sometimes it is something as basic as, "I don't have a ride to get there."

So being able to have

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partnerships with the Office of Drug Control Policy and different entities like CORE, and other areas throughout the state, as well to be able to make sure that people need to get where they need to go, has been huge for our population, so we are so grateful for that.

We will connect to the local community mental health centers, with closing closets, and food pantries, and our probation offices.

We work with our different reentry organization groups and faith-based groups, the reentry councils, and we do have veterans assistance that works pre and post release for our veterans that are being released as well.

Specific to employment, we have a lot of employment issues because employment is one of the biggest barriers to someone being successful on supervision.

So just to talk about a few employment initiatives that we have, we have an opportunity for employers called

1 the PIECP. It is Prison Industries
2 Certification Program. I know we're close
3 to Thanksgiving. When we say pie I am
4 thinking pumpkin, but this is different.
5 So it is the PIE program that we call it.

6 It is where we pay and we work
7 with an outside sector or an outside
8 employer to come in. They work in our
9 facilities, have a real wage, prevailing
10 wages that they pay our inmates prerelease
11 for the services.

12 Right now, we have Restoration
13 Parts Unlimited that is at KCIW. What
14 they do is we have women at the Kentucky
15 Correctional Institute for Women who are
16 sewing different pieces to restore classic
17 cars for their different upholstery. It's
18 really, really cool if you see it.

19 But if you know anything about
20 inmate wages, it is pennies. So this
21 actually gets them prevailing wages. The
22 way their wages are divided up, it is
23 divided up to where certain amounts of
24 wages go to certain things. Some of it
25 goes to Crime Victims Fund, some of it

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they save to prepare for release. It is a really great program. We do hope to have another one or two industries that are in the pipeline kind of getting ready to start with this.

I can't say it out loud yet, but we are hoping to see this grow more in the future because this is an amazing opportunity for our population.

We did also work over the past couple of years and receive a grant to work input and create a game. I will age myself for a second, but if anybody played the Sims game where you have a little diamond above your head, it looks like that basically. And it is where you have a simulator to where an individual is going through this game and it is a prerelease preparation to prepare someone for a job interview.

Even basic things like that, a lot of times when we want to do things like that we all know it costs money so we have to get the funds from somewhere, so we got a grant to be able to put that on

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the tablets for the population to be able to prep for employment prerelease.

We have REPA, Reentry Employment Program Administrators that are in the community. They focus solely on getting people jobs. These positions originally were funded through the Kentucky Overdose Response Effort grant. Several years ago, we started with just a handful of them. They were doing so good, we were given more, and then eventually we moved off of grant funding to where we are fully funded just with state funds.

Actually, I can announce today that we are continuing to see success that we are adding two more of them. So that position just continues to grow. So pretty soon I will have 13 REPAs throughout the state. Still not enough, but we just keep growing slowly. We started with a couple.

What they do is person-centered assessments and they focus 100 percent on the clients trying to make sure that they get a job, because we know if someone is

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getting money and getting a paycheck in their pocket, they are more likely to be successful and not continue to commit crimes.

The other 20 percent of their job is to go door to door and focus and speak with employers and explain the benefits of being a second-chance employer and really try to drum up more and more employers in the Commonwealth population.

We have our employment pipeline to where we really start prerelease with starting to have those conversations and make sure that we know, are you going to need a job? Do you have a job lined up? This all started about the same time as our reentry needs checklist.

And then within the last few months, we have our Second Chance State Government Employment initiative. Governor Beshear announced that all state Governor cabinets will be second chance state employers, and this is one of the things that I should have updated on here and I didn't. This has now expanded to

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all state counties. Every state government cabinet is a second chance state employer.

Every cabinet in the state of Kentucky has picked positions, some of them have just said any position, but they have really gone through and said, we challenge employers -- the governors said, we challenge employers in the state to be a second chance employer, why aren't we doing it? So we are. That's exactly what we are doing now. It's been wonderful.

We host expungement sessions, we host reentry simulations, we host job and resource fairs. These are jointly hosted with different entities. I know a lot of people on this call have participated and seen a lot of these events. I'm not going to dive into details on any of them. But we do a lot of informational events and sessions for our population, but also for community members as well to educate.

Different collaborations that we have, we work to ensure with the Department of Transportation, funded by

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KORE and the Kentucky Chamber Foundation to ensure that everyone from the state prisons and our jails where we have staff, are being released with a state ID.

I hit on transportation vouchers. We talked with technology advancements trying to make sure we get games on the tablets to really work on that as well, to a lot of times people in our state prisons have been removed from society for so long that they need help with learning technology in many instances, but also with preparation for jobs specifically as well.

Continuing medical treatment. We have a Hep C and HIV in Jails initiative going on employment pipeline that I hit on. The most recent one we are working on is KRS213.141, which will allow birth certificates to be free, which is big because there is a fee waiver for homeless clients. So we have been in talks with them to make sure that our population -- a lot of our population is homeless at the time of release, so why is

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our population having to pay for birth certificates? So we are working on that right now.

We work with Goodwill, we have an Aspire project working with them, we have a couple of exciting union partnerships that are starting in the beginning of the year to where we have the unions -- the ironworkers unions and the painters that will be coming in and actually facilitating their whole pre-apprenticeship at a couple of our prisons to train people in their trade.

Again, thanks to Van, we did Narcan distribution in 2023 and 2024. You can see over 17,000 kits were issued in 2023 and over 6,000 in 2024.

I see Angela on here. We are working in partnership on the Medicaid 1115 waiver expansion. So we are working on that and I should have put CAA on that too, because that is coming up sooner than Medicaid 1115.

We have peer recovery coaches with addiction services and Voices of

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Hope, and then the second chance study.

My very last slide. I've done a lot of talking and throwing a lot at you, but my very last slide that I've got here is to say this: You can see where we were. 2015, 2016, 2014, we were high in recidivism. We had to put in a lot of changes and a lot of efforts.

Everything I have said today, you know I am talking in a perfect world. We all know also that we don't live in a perfect world, so there are challenges that the Department of Corrections face. We face a lot of challenges. We face challenges in predicting release dates. There are immediate release dates that happen to where we can't prepare sometimes for all of these releases. We didn't get time to do that.

We talked about the challenge that we are not providing all of these services to everyone coming out of the jails. We do have people that get missed. So I do not want to sit in this group and sit here and try to say we are doing

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everything amazing at the Department of Corrections. That is not me. That's not what we do. We aren't. There's a lot of room for improvement, so I'm so grateful for groups like this and all the entities that come together and work to benefit.

I'm super excited for Nathan to start being in this group as well to hear his perspective, because it doesn't always work. It does not always work. People get missed. People today get missed. Even with all of the efforts that we have put into place, people get missed. We have vacancies and positions that can't get filled and people get missed. But with all of the efforts that have been made, you can see the reduction in recidivism. So you can see that we have been heading in the right direction.

Everything that we have done has been working. Whether we wanted it to are not, we got a real-life experience with the COVID pandemic, because we had to shut down a lot of services and pause a lot of services for the protection of our

1 population. So we didn't have a choice.
2 And as a result of that, you immediately
3 saw, if you are not aware of how
4 recidivism works in the state of Kentucky,
5 we measured on a two-year interval.
6 Whether we want that real-life test or
7 not, we had it.

8 You immediately saw when be
9 paused services, recidivism goes back up.
10 So that shows us that everything that we
11 are doing has been working. And that is
12 all I have.

13 MR. SHANNON: Wow. I knew very
14 little about what is available. That is
15 really a robust thing, really since 2018,
16 right?

17 MS. PORTER: Yes. We have been
18 busy, Steve.

19 MR. SHANNON: Yes. We are about
20 three and a half or four months short of
21 seven years. And look what you have done
22 in that period of time. It really is
23 remarkable.

24 MS. PORTER: So much more to do,
25 though.

1 MR. SHANNON: Yes, but it's okay
2 to appreciate what's already been done.

3 MR. INGRAM: I just want to say
4 Steve, you look at those numbers, she
5 won't say it, but a lot of this is
6 contributed to Kristen. I meet with her
7 regularly, and the same enthusiasm she has
8 today, she has it every single meeting,
9 and is always excited and working to move
10 Kentucky forward.

11 So Kristen, you've done an
12 amazing job.

13 MS. PORTER: Thank you.

14 MR. SHANNON: Are there any
15 questions? A lot of positive comments.
16 It is good to see.

17 Well, congrats to you and your
18 team. It is obviously making a change in
19 people's lives and it feeds right in.

20 We are only going to go another
21 nine minutes, truthfully, so we are going
22 to adjust our agenda.

23 Let's hear from Medicaid. Can
24 you do that, Angela? I will set a
25 stopwatch on you.

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MS. SPARROW: Thank you, Steve.

I was going to say, I don't know if anybody has ever had to follow Kristen before, but she is a tough act to follow and we certainly appreciate it.

We can't all say enough, Kristen, about the work that you all are doing. It is always great to hear and we always learn something new hearing from you all as well.

Just to provide some updates in the Medicaid space, again, I just want to take the opportunity when we have a chance to say from overall Medicaid perspective, again, we are in open enrollment period at this time so please anybody, we always ask and appreciate your support working with us and our members, but we want to help them through that process and make sure, again, that we get that completed. So we will certainly drop in some information in the chat, but again I just want to make sure that we have that word out about that.

In terms of reentry updates, we

1 did submit -- Kentucky did submit our
2 implementation plan that we spoke to quite
3 a bit to CMS at the end of October, so
4 that was a great milestone to meet, but
5 with that being said, we still have quite
6 a bit of work to do over the next couple
7 of quarters in terms of how the
8 operational laws are planned.

9 So getting into the nuts and
10 bolts and details of some of the things
11 that we have discussed. That will still
12 be ongoing, meeting with DOC and DJJ on a
13 regular basis, and then, again, we will be
14 pulling in the MCOs to be part of those
15 discussions, so that work will continue,
16 again, I think into spring, so I should
17 mention in the implementation plan
18 submission, we did request and are looking
19 at an October 1st, 2025 go live date.

20 So what that means again, CMS
21 still has to approve that plan before we
22 can implement. We talked about that time
23 period is still unknown, but again we will
24 continue to work through how to
25 operationalize the plan, and then we will

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move towards facility readiness. So we can expect to kick that offspring to summer of 2025.

What that means is we will be working with each individual facility to ensure again that they are ready to go live from 1/1.

So that system changes again, changes to our eligibility systems, again, with some of the health data exchanges that we have talked about, and again ensuring that we have all of that work in place for a 1/1 date, hoping at that time our facilities will be providing the prerelease services and able to determine who is eligible, number one, for those prerelease services, and providing those prerelease services, and then being reimbursed for that. So just to give a little bit of the timeline.

But that facility readiness will occur again through 2025.

We are working and will submit our monitoring protocol to CMS and anticipating to do that before

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Thanksgiving break. Some of the things that we will need to work with there, we want to ensure for each of the milestones that we have appropriate measures and metrics in place.

Some of the things we will need to work through is how we might collect the data, so there can be some challenges around that.

I do want to say we have an upcoming reentry form and I am going to drop the link, so it is an opportunity for a more detailed discussion and question and answers, but that is going to be on December 12, and information is posted on the website and will go out to each of the TACs, and, again, the reentry committees and teams, but we will get that information posted.

So that will be an opportunity again for a little bit more of a detailed overview of the program and kind of the next steps.

We have again, we are in the process of onboarding our evaluator, which

1 will be Mercer. Again, they will be the
2 independent evaluator. They will be
3 submitting an evaluation plan to CMS by
4 the end of the year so we will be working
5 to get them on-boarded just to ensure,
6 again, that they have an understanding of
7 Kentucky's goals and implementation
8 projection and, again, be able to complete
9 that evaluation design and submit to CMS.
10 We will be working with them over the next
11 six or so weeks on that.

12 I want to talk quickly about
13 CAA, the Consolidation Appropriations Act.
14 Again, while it is not directly under the
15 1115 -- reentry 1115 -- it will include
16 the reentry initiatives, so again, the CAA
17 is going to be included in the Medicaid
18 form, too, so we'll have an opportunity to
19 go through that a little bit more, too, so
20 high level. Again, those are new
21 provisions and requirements to state
22 Medicaid agencies to go into effect
23 1/1/25.

24 It is a subset of services if
25 you will, of prerelease services required

1 for any eligible juvenile which is defined
2 as an individual 21 and under, and also
3 our former foster care youth, so up to
4 26 -- 18 to 26. That is going to include
5 screening diagnostic services and targeted
6 case management services, 30 days
7 prerelease, and again, targeted case
8 management service, 30 days post-release.

9 We have been in communication
10 and conversation with CMS, who is speaking
11 with all states about readiness, and they
12 understand the challenges and constraints
13 of states to be able to implement at a
14 1/1/25 date.

15 So they are looking at states in
16 terms of fully ready, partially ready, and
17 just not ready at all. I think that every
18 state is going to fall into that partial
19 ready. I don't think that any state is
20 going to be fully ready. We will submit
21 required stall changes, state plan
22 amendment changes, again, given that CMS
23 has that information available for us
24 1/1/25, we will have that in place and we
25 will have our operational plan in place.

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Again, it is going to be -- the 1/1 date we will be partially ready. There are some facilities for identifying DJJ and DOC, potentially being able to start 1/1/25, but through 2025, we will really then, our plan will be how we will become compliant, fully compliant, for the CAA provisions.

So again, knowing that no state is going to have all of the eligibility system changes on all of the facilities in their state on board and ready to go 1/1/25. We are targeting 1/1/25 and we will have some facilities, again, able to meet some other requirements for CAA provisions, and then we'll work together through 2025 to really fill out the plan of how we will onboard the other facilities and get to that whole compliance.

We've started engaging with the jails and having some discussions with them about that. So it is going to look very differently for our jails and DOC and DJJ partners.

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So our hope is to survey what they are currently doing and get a better understanding of their landscape each and individually, so we can start to build out that road map for 2025, and what that is going to look like for Kentucky in terms of the CAA requirements.

There is going to be some overlap with the reentry demonstration and we will talk a little bit more into that with the reentry forum.

We, again, are also trying to update the website, so we can have some information that is more accessible for individuals in our public to view in terms of the reentry projects going forward.

I am reading through a lot there. Again, hopefully we have a forum. We were going to try to use this for an avenue for our forum, but we will have a separate form next month and certainly invite you all to participate, and I will get that information dropped in the chat and we will also get it out through the TAC distribution as well.

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MR. SHANNON: And the distinction is CAA is used and jails are included?

MS. SPARROW: Jails are included in that, yes.

MR. SHANNON: It may create an opportunity down the road to add the 1115 to jails.

MS. SPARROW: It is. I think this will be the starting point. It will be challenging just to get the conversations going with them, so this is an opportunity that we can start to understand what they are currently doing, what that may look like in their reentry 1115 space. So absolutely this will be a great step forward.

MR. SHANNON: All right. Thank you. That's a great report.

I apologize to our MCO friends, we are not going to get to them on the agenda. I know we only go for an hour and people have other things planned and that's okay. We'll get to those updates in January.

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I just can't thank Kristen Porter enough for that information. I just think, for me, it is one of the best 45 minutes we spent on this TAC, really understanding what is available, how robust that is, and ultimately how this waiver can interface with the initiatives already going on.

So no need to apologize, it was really good information and again, I do apologize to other folks, other members, we are going to skip even the round Robin updates and let people get on with their day. But again, thank you.

That was a great suggestion that Kristen made last month to have this discussion. The PowerPoint is available. It was in there somewhere in the chat and if you want to take a look at that and we will have it posted on the TAC webpage maybe.

Is that correct, Erin?

MS. BICKERS: Yes.

MR. SHANNON: So the Reentry TAC, Persons Returning to Society from

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Incarceration TAC will be posted there so you can get that PowerPoint and get that information.

Just great job, Kristen. Thank you very much. You do have a lot of enthusiasm and we are glad you are there.

You all take care and we will talk in January of 2025. Enjoy your Thanksgiving. You all take care.

(Meeting adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, STEFANIE SWEET, Certified Verbatim Reporter and Registered CART Provider - Master, hereby certify that the foregoing record represents the original record of the Technical Advisory Committee meeting; the record is an accurate and complete recording of the proceeding; and a transcript of this record has been produced and delivered to the Department of Medicaid Services.

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Dated this date th/st/nd of
MONTH/YEAR

Stefanie Sweet, CVR, RCP-M