Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC)

Summary of the Assembly Bill (AB) 1050

Executive Steering Committee (ESC) Meeting

December 3, 2014

The following is a brief summary of the December 3, 2014 AB 1050 ESC meeting held at the Office of the District Attorney in Los Angeles. The meeting was led by Board Chair Linda Penner. The meeting began with member introductions, a minor edit and approval of the September minutes, and a review of the agenda.

Members were told the BSCC adopted the committee’s proposed recidivism definition at a November meeting. Members discussed sharing the recidivism definition with their respective associations, and said attention has shifted to Proposition 47.

The purpose of the meeting is to define the remaining terms identified by AB 1050 and the committee. At the September meeting members requested that staff meet with the author of AB 1050 to clarify the intent behind “defining treatment program completion rate.” Specifically should the definition be tied to recidivism, can the focus be narrowed to criminal justice programs and to convey the challenges of defining the term?

Chair Penner and staff met with the author’s office in October to convey the concerns of the committee. The author’s office referred staff to a Legislative Analyst Office report titled “The 2013-14 Budget: Governor’s Criminal Justice Proposals.”

Staff provided the report to the committee and reminded members they discussed the report at prior meetings. Staff also crafted a draft definition.

**Recommended Definition**

Treatment program completion rate is the percentage of people entering a program who go on to complete it.

**Measurement**

Treatment programs are multifaceted in their design, services and population served. To avoid unintentionally excluding programs with a narrow definition, respondents are asked to define enrollment and completion prior to calculating the treatment program completion rate.

1. Enrollment
   * An enrollment definition includes criteria on admittance, intake, and/or referral. A clear start date should be captured locally.
     1. E.g. Enrollment in the ABC treatment program begins after the participant completes an in-take interview with a program counselor.
     2. E.g. Enrollment in the ABC treatment program begins when the

participant receives an acceptance letter.

1. Completion
   * A completion definition includes criteria on the steps a participant must take to finish the program. The client’s status at departure (e.g. met criteria, transferred out of program, dismissed from program, etc.) and date of completion should be captured locally.
     1. E.g. Completion in the ABC treatment program is defined as graduation from phases 1-3.
     2. E.g. Completion of the ABC treatment program is achieved when the participant receives a Certificate of Completion.

**Formula**

Number Completed = Completion Rate

Number Enrolled

1. Tally the number of participants who have enrolled in the program;
2. Tally the number of participants who have completed the program; and
3. Divide completions by enrollment to arrive at the completion rate.

Members discussed the challenge of defining this term. Program completion can be achieved by meeting prescribed criteria, completing an administered test, showing up daily, or in some instances the participant is required to pay a fee to receive a certification of completion. Concerns regarding variance in program quality, data collection and outcomes also were raised.

Discussion on these topics evolved into a conversation on evidence-based programs and practices. The committee noted community-based organizations are new to evidence-based interventions and will need help in this area. Questions were also raised regarding evidence-based programs and whether they are normed for the populations in California. A staff update conveyed that recent state and federal grants administered by the BSCC include language that explains what is an evidence-based program, evidence-based practice and promising practices. Some BSCC staff have received training on a tool known as the Correctional Program Checklist (CPC). The CPC was developed for assessing correctional intervention programs and is used to ascertain how closely correctional programs meet known principles of effective intervention.

Dialogue transitioned to the draft definition. Members discussed adding a validation section to the treatment definition. The prevailing thought was enrollment and completion are important to capture, however knowing the recidivism rate for each program can provide insight about what works. Through dialogue the committee agreed some treatment programs address needs related to recidivism, however because recidivism is not the primary goal of all treatment programs members decided against the addition.

Concerns were raised that by defining treatment program completion rate it would establish a standard for comparing or evaluating programs, or would indicate a program is good or bad. Members wanted to convey the usefulness of the definition but also its limitations. A new section was added to the definition under a sub-heading titled “Limitations.” The definition reads:

**Recommended Definition**

Treatment program completion rate is the percentage of people entering a program who go on to complete it.

**Limitations**

While this measure provides useful information for the purposes of program evaluation, by itself it does not provide a direct measure of program effectiveness.

**Measurement**

Treatment programs are multifaceted in their design, services and population served. To avoid unintentionally excluding programs with a narrow definition, respondents are asked to define enrollment and completion prior to calculating the treatment program completion rate.

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   * A completion definition includes criteria on the steps a participant must take to finish the program. The client’s status at departure (e.g. met criteria, transferred out of program, dismissed from program, etc.) and date of completion should be captured locally.
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**Formula**

Number Completed = Completion Rate

Number Enrolled

1. Tally the number of participants who have enrolled in the program;
2. Tally the number of participants who have completed the program; and
3. Divide completions by enrollment to arrive at the completion rate.

A motion was made to vote on the proposed definition, and staff was asked to craft a new subheading to replace limitations. The motion was seconded and votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

A new subheading will be provided to the committee electronically and prior to the next meeting.

At the September meeting the committee began the conversation on average length of stay by looking at the definition found in the BSCC Jail Profile Survey. There was a request for a presentation on the Jail Profile Survey, as questions were raised regarding book and releases, six-hour holds and jail bed impacts.

Staff provided an oral synopsis of the Jail Profile Survey. Through dialogue members agreed this topic was important but would benefit from a small work group of Sheriffs or Sheriff designees reviewing the survey, crafting and/or tweaking definitions related to the survey, and recommending definitions to the committee. Members would then review and recommend the BSCC adopt definitions crafted by the work group.

A motion was made to establish a sub-committee co-led by Sheriff David Robinson and Susan Turner, Ph.D., to address terms relative to the Jail Profile Survey and report back to the ESC. The motion was seconded and votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

In its initial meetings members identified “offender population” as a term that would benefit from a definition. Ensuing dialogue revealed the statute was clear on what constitutes an offender and a definition was not necessary.

A motion was made to remove offender population as a term the committee would define. The motion was seconded and votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

Dialogue transitioned to “conviction,” and members re-affirmed it was important to agree on a definition as “conviction” is used in the recidivism definition. Members noted the judicial council receives data from counties on conviction, however there are no assurances each county is using the same definition. Through dialogue the committee agreed to the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office definition of conviction. The definition reads:

**Conviction**

Entry of judgment of guilty on a plea of guilty or no contest or on a verdict of guilty.

A motion was made to adopt the definition of conviction used by the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office. The motion was seconded and votes were cast as follows:

Ayes: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

The committee agreed to reconvene in the spring (date to be determined) to consider the recommendations of the Jail Profile Survey sub-committee.

The meeting concluded without public comment.