

Historical Record Guidance

Washington State Department of Corrections, 2005-2012

Summary

The Department of Corrections – an agency whose footprint dates back to Washington Territory – had never before in its long history experienced as many rapid, fundamental changes in a short period of time as it did between 2005 and 2012.

The challenges were dynamic – quickly shifting from expansion to contraction – and were in constant motion as state revenue kept falling and high-profile tragedies made national news. After 30 years of constant, gradual growth, the agency suddenly had to reduce spending by nearly \$300 million, reduce its workforce by 20 percent and close three prisons, all while maintaining 24-hour operations that managed an increasingly high-risk, violent offender population.

The challenges of the last four years were the polar opposite of those it faced during the first four, divided in half by the Great Recession. During the first half the agency struggled to fully staff its newest, largest prison in the remote town of Connell so it could return nearly 1,200 offenders – and the related jobs – back from other states. DOC had billboards across the state, competing against higher-paying county jail positions. To slow the future growth of prisons, the Legislature invested in reentry programs with the hope of reducing recidivism.

Then, suddenly, the state’s General Fund plummeted and the Department of Corrections went from recruiting staff members and opening new prisons to laying off staff members and closing units. One group of new employees was let go midway through their orientation class.

At the peak of the prison unit closures, there was a constant migration of staff and offenders. Some staff members moved across the state three or four times to avoid being laid off or took a lower-paying position to stay. Many were separated from their families and lived in fifth-wheel trailers or coworkers’ couches, not knowing if they would have to move again soon. In community corrections, the offender caseload dropped from nearly 30,000 to 15,000, resulting in hundreds of job losses and relocations across the state. At headquarters, divisions and administrator positions were eliminated, and more than 100 offices and cubicles were suddenly empty.

After initial across-the-board spending cuts that primarily reduced administration, support staff and offender programs, the agency became more strategic in how it downsized its operations, focusing its resources on those offenders who are considered the highest risk to commit a new crime.

After initial across-the-board spending cuts that primarily reduced administration, support staff and offender programs, the agency became more strategic in how it downsized its operations, focusing its resources on those offenders who are considered the highest risk to commit a new crime.

Building on the work done by previous DOC administrations to better identify the risk and needs of offenders, the agency supported legislation that ended minimal supervision of lower-risk offenders. The Prisons Division began doing more to ensure that evidence-based programs that address criminal thinking were reserved for higher-risk offenders who are near their release date. It began developing case plans that cover an offender's entire time under DOC's jurisdiction – from prison intake through the end of community supervision – to create a seamless transition throughout the system.

The challenges that the Department of Corrections faces today will likely intensify in the coming years. The Prisons Division is currently operating at nearly full capacity, giving administrators little flexibility to manage a diverse, violent and high-needs offender population. The number of gang-affiliated

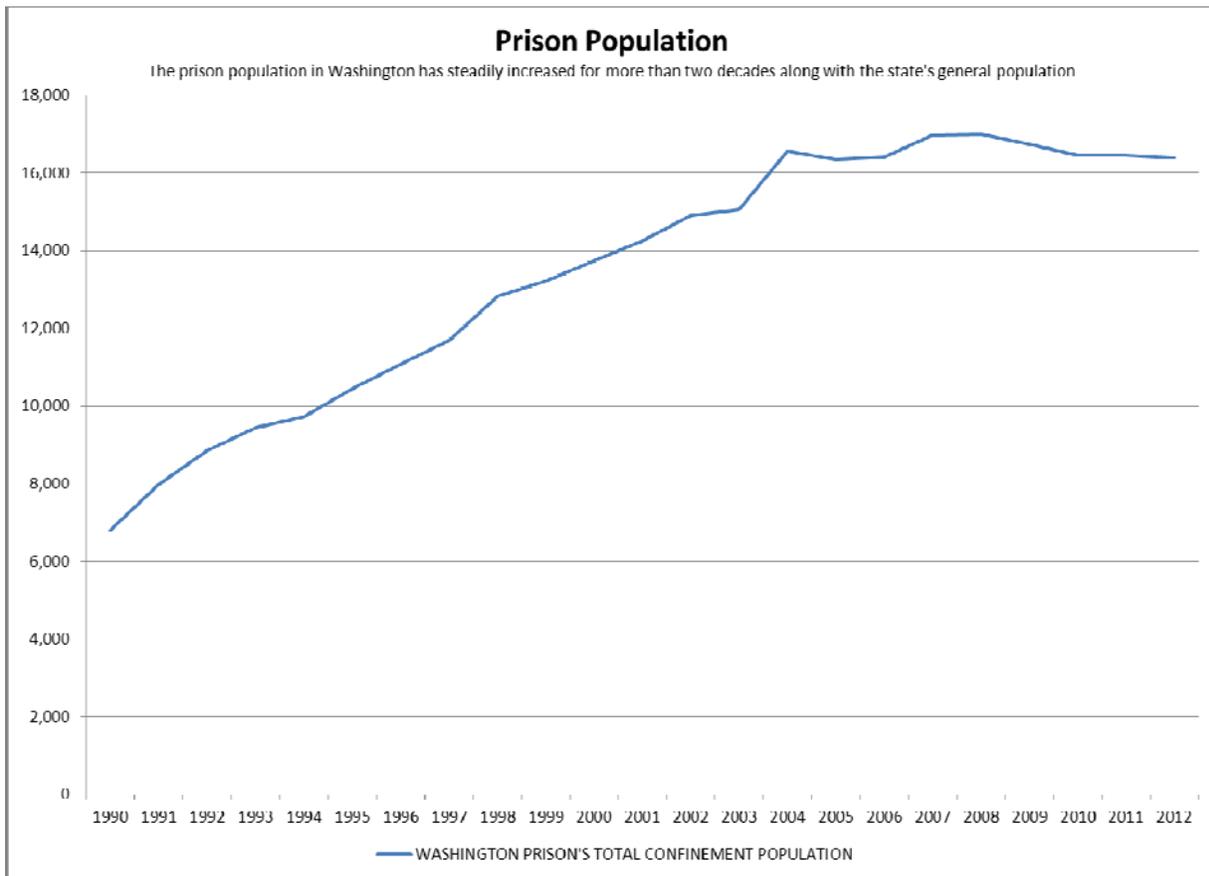
offenders will continue to increase as law enforcement targets gang violence. The number of mentally ill offenders will increase as long as community resources for the mentally ill continue to dwindle. Meanwhile, the prison population will grow increasingly older and require additional medical care.

Still, the Department of Corrections today is better equipped to carry out its mission than it was eight years ago. It decreased the average daily cost of incarceration from \$102 per offender to \$90 today. It significantly reduced health-care costs while continuing to provide adequate services. It moved offenders out of older prison units and into newer, more efficient ones that cost less to maintain and operate. It became a nationally recognized leader in sustainability by reducing waste, increasing efficiency and helping partner agencies with important wildlife restoration projects that engage offenders in positive activities. It supported and implemented laws that resulted in community corrections officers having more consistent, manageable caseloads. It began using swift and certain sanctions to address violations in the community, which has proven in other jurisdictions to be highly successful at increasing offender compliance. It significantly reduced the number of violent infractions in prisons even as the offender population became more violent and there was less capacity. And, most notably, it took action to increase staff safety by implementing hundreds of changes recommended by front-line staff members, providing staff members with additional security training and providing them with enhanced safety equipment including OC spray, body alarms and proximity cards.

It was a difficult, sometimes painful period in the agency’s history, yet if one looks at some of the most important dashboard measurements for a corrections agency – staff safety, violence reduction, efficiency, offender health-care costs, targeted use of evidence-based programs, offender accountability – the Department of Corrections is a better agency today than it was in January 2005.

Section 1: Prisons Division

To understand the story of the Prisons Division, one must first understand how the offender caseload has evolved over the years.



Compared to other states, Washington has one of the lowest incarceration rates in the nation, meaning that it has a relatively small, violent offender population. About 85 percent of incarcerated offenders in Washington are either serving a sentence for a violent crime or have been convicted of a violent crime in the past. Thoughtful sentencing guidelines and sentencing alternatives – particularly those for drug offenders who receive intensive chemical-dependency treatment – prevented Washington’s prison population from soaring along with most other states during the 1980s and ’90s.

Still, the prison population continued to gradually increase along with the state's total population, from 6,000 offenders in 1990 to more than 16,000 in 2005.

Between 1993 and 2009 the agency built or expanded three large, medium-custody prisons – in Spokane, Aberdeen and Connell – but even that was not enough to keep up with the demand. By 2008, there were more than 1,100 offenders housed in for-profit, out-of-state prisons, which meant Washington jobs were outsourced. And offenders sent to for-profit prisons had little or no access to programs that addressed their criminal behavior.

By early 2009, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center in Connell was gradually opening its newest units, allowing for the return of out-of-state offenders. At about the same time the Legislature provided funds for DOC to find a location and pay for the pre-design of a new men's reception center in Western Washington that would help with future capacity needs and revert its existing reception center in Shelton back to its original purpose as a general-population prison.

For a brief moment in early 2009, the Prisons Division had adequate capacity for its current needs and plans in place to meet future demands.

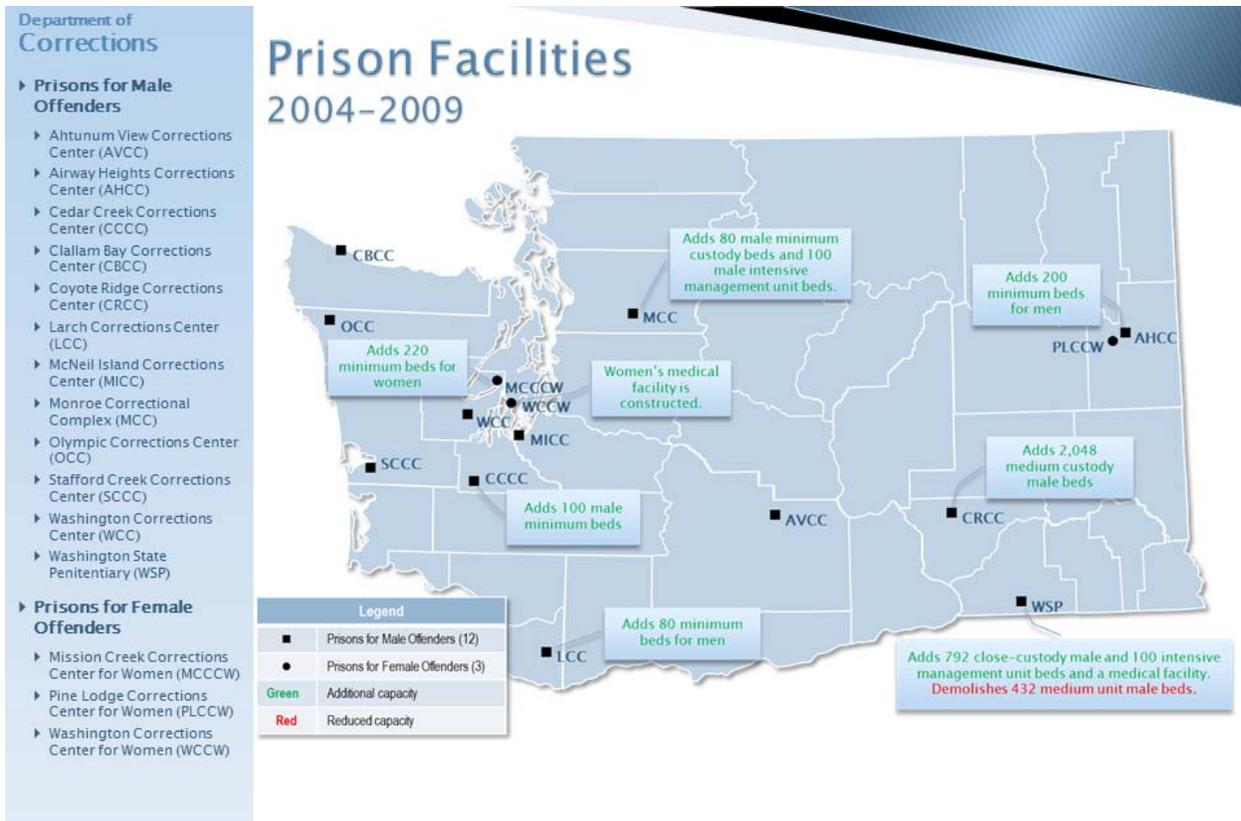
Then, just at that moment, Washington felt the initial impact of the financial meltdown, and that brief moment of certainty was over.

The Prison Shuffle

The challenge quickly turned from adding capacity to making operations more efficient. While the Prisons Division's newest facilities were energy efficient – Coyote Ridge became the world's first prison to have its entire campus certified LEED Gold – many of its other facilities were old, inefficient and in need of repair.

Consultants contracted by the Office of Financial Management recommended that the agency close Larch Corrections Center, a minimum-security work camp in Clark County. At one point the Prisons Division closed one of its two units as staff members transferred to Coyote Ridge which needed an experienced staff to manage its new units.

But by the time it came to close the last unit at Larch, the state's General Fund had shrunk again so administrators had to find a way to reduce spending by even more. So the agency closed McNeil Island Corrections Center instead, shuttering the nation's last island prison. It was the third standalone prison the state closed in less than a year.

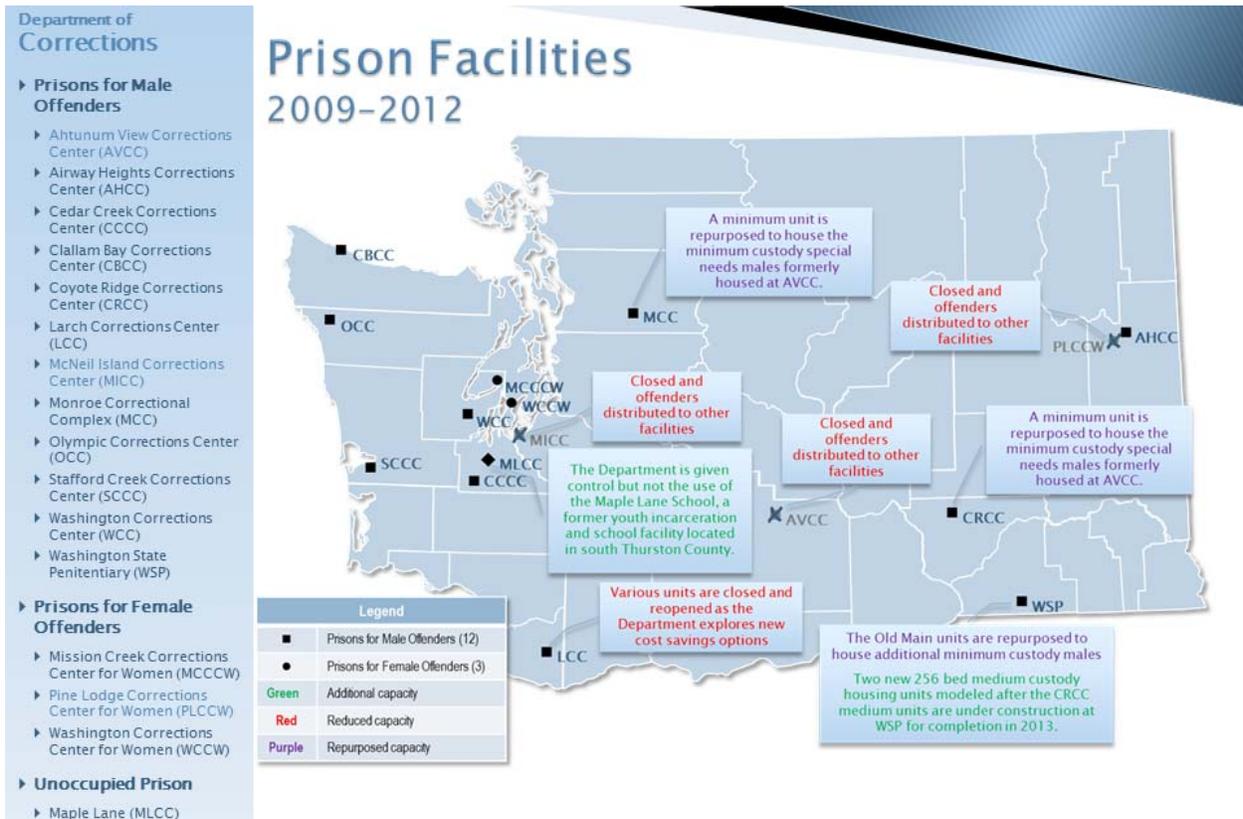


During the first half of the Administration, DOC continued to expand its prison capacity to meet the demand for additional bed space and bring more than 1,000 offenders back from other states.

While closing Ahtunum View, Pine Lodge and McNeil Island made the agency more efficient, it set off a chain of staff and offender relocations that impacted prisons across the state. In some units there were staff members who had all just relocated from other prisons or units weeks earlier, managing offenders who had just arrived as well.

In addition to unit closures, the Prisons Division began adjusting the custody level of units to meet the current demands of the offender population. An analysis found that nearly 1,000 minimum-custody offenders were being housed in medium-custody level beds, which is neither cost efficient nor good corrections practice. To increase the number of minimum-custody beds the agency changed the custody level at some of the oldest units at the Washington State Penitentiary so it could house minimum-custody offenders.

The Human Resources staff and prison administrators collaborated to assist those impacted by the unit closures and changes. They were able to maintain enough vacancies and find enough alternatives at other prisons and field offices to minimize layoffs while still reducing costs.



During the second half of the Administration, DOC closed three standalone prisons, closed some older, inefficient units, and repurposed older units to provide the additional minimum-custody beds the agency needed. The multiple activities resulted in the biggest migration of staff and offenders in the agency's history.

Staff Safety Initiative

On the night of Jan. 29, 2011, Correctional Officer Jayme Biendl was found dead inside the chapel of the Washington State Reformatory Unit at Monroe Correctional Complex. An offender serving a life sentence without the opportunity for parole was later charged with her murder. By sunrise the next morning it was the lead story on national news. It was the first death in the line of duty in a Washington prison in 32 years and was the highest-profile incident in the agency's history.

The Governor asked the National Institute of Corrections to review all practices and procedures at the medium-custody unit and to identify ways to increase staff safety. The review made 15 recommendations, including additional staff training, providing staff members with cans of OC (pepper) spray and an offender screening process that included multiple disciplines.

Ultimately, the review team found, the Washington State Reformatory Unit faced the same inherent challenge that all corrections units face, which is a sense of complacency that comes with repetitive work and the natural tendency to normalize your work environment.

The agency took immediate action to increase staff safety, in both prisons and field offices, implementing all 15 recommendations made by the National Institute of Corrections.

The agency took immediate action to increase staff safety, in both prisons and field offices, implementing all 15 recommendations made by the National Institute of Corrections. The Governor introduced a bill that would provide funding to purchase enhanced safety equipment, including OC spray, proximity cards that help determine where staff members are, creating additional staff positions whose sole responsibility is to ensure staff members are accounted for, and installing additional surveillance cameras. The bill passed with overwhelming support from the Legislature.

The law has been fully implemented with many components ongoing. The Prisons Division established Security Forums that provide additional training for first-level supervisors. Its newly created annual agency training plan includes a focus on physical plant safety and offender movement, opening and closing of program areas, zoned response coverage for Response and Movement Officers, and more.

The Prisons Division also established local Security Advisory Committees that consist of represented staff members from multiple disciplines – including custody and non-custody – to review staff safety suggestions and concerns and recommend solutions.

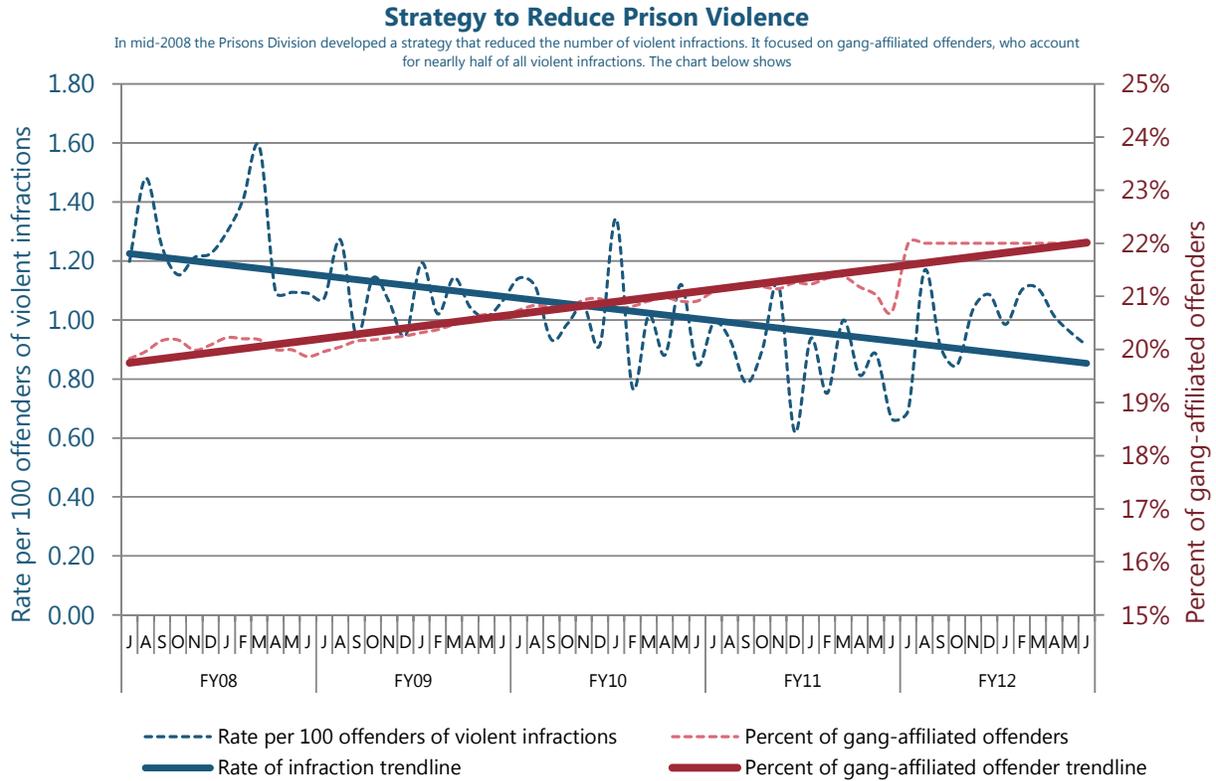
The Governor also included a provision in the law that requires an annual report on corrections staff safety be submitted to the Office of the Governor and Legislature to ensure that it remains a constant focus of the state.

Violence Reduction

One of the measurements that the agency tracks as part of the Governor’s accountability program was the number of violent infractions, which peaked in mid-2008. Prison administrators studied the data and found the primary culprit: Gang-affiliated offenders – who account for about 20 percent of prison population – accounted for about 48 percent of all violent infractions. In particular, members of two rival Hispanic gangs, the Nortenos and Surenos, accounted for much of the violence.

The Prisons Division developed a strategy that included better identifying gang-affiliated offenders and segregating the most violent members of rival gangs in the West Complex, a close-custody unit at the Washington State Penitentiary that opened in 2008.

The strategy worked. The number of violent infractions dramatically decreased at every men’s prison in the state, including the Penitentiary. It also allows gang-affiliated offenders, like all other offenders, to earn their way to lower custody levels by demonstrating good behavior.



By 2012 the number of violent infractions began to gradually increase due in part to an increasingly compact prison system. Administrators met with their counterparts at Oregon Department of Corrections to share best practices and began studying the success that David Kennedy, Director of the Center for Crime Prevention and Control at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, had in dramatically reducing gang violence in communities to see if it can be replicated in a prison system.

Correctional Industries

Correctional Industries – a division that provides job opportunities for about 1,400 offenders who build furniture, cook the meals in prisons, work in commissaries, manufacture license plates and more – underwent a fundamental transformation, becoming more customer focused and more efficient.

Over the years Correctional Industries had become unpopular with many of its customers, which is limited to DOC, other state government agencies and nonprofit organizations. Its delivery time was slower than those in the private sector and there was little in place to ensure quality. And much of the

equipment was outdated, which did not provide offenders with current job skills that they could use once they completed their prison sentence.



The renovated assembly line at the commissary at Airway Heights Corrections Center was designed under the Lean principles to increase efficiency. High turnover products are put at arm's reach while low turnover items are placed at the end of the assembly line.

In December 2007 Secretary Vail appointed Lyle Morse as Director of Correctional Industries. Morse used his experience in private-sector manufacturing to increase quality, standardize operations, shorten delivery times, decrease waste and consolidate manufacturing sites.

The improvements helped the division overcome significant losses that came as a result of new laws and initiatives. When a law was passed that said drivers must purchase new license plates every 10 years instead of seven years, it reduced demand by 30 percent. The state Liquor Control Board, which had purchased its fixtures and furniture from Correctional Industries, closed its stores as the result of a voter-approved initiative that privatized liquor sales.

But as the division streamlined its operations and earned a better reputation it was able to add new customers, including the University of Washington, Western Washington University, The Evergreen State College and Pacific Lutheran University. When the University of Washington added more than 1,000 new rooms to its residence halls, it purchased the furniture from Correctional Industries.

When the Governor instructed agencies to begin following Lean principles which had been successful at improving operations at The Boeing Company and other private-sector manufacturers, Correctional Industries was one of the early adopters. The Lean principles, which increases efficiency by identifying and eliminating waste throughout the production process, also increased staff safety in prisons by improving sightlines in manufacturing sites and improving the inventory process of potentially dangerous tools.

Success with Lean

Correctional Industries has seen success by using Lean principles

CI centralized its procurement, production planning and distribution

90 percent reduction in its procurement process

35 percent reduction in square footage

42 percent lead-time reduction in processing customer orders

CI consolidated seven satellite commissaries into two locations, removed cardboard waste and began using reusable Totes, and improved the flow of the assembly line

86 percent lead-time reduction in processing commissary orders

98 percent reduction in cardboard waste

CI standardized its statewide menu, centralized procurement, production planning and distribution

\$1.3 million in cost avoidance

Increased available production hours from 15 to 22 hours per week

Prison Capacity Needs

While closing some of the oldest units made the Prisons Division more efficient, it left administrators with virtually no excess capacity. By early 2012 some offenders at the men's reception center in Shelton were sleeping on the floor because there was no room at the other men's prisons, or if there was it was the wrong custody level or lacked resources for the offender's medical needs.

In July 2012 the Washington State Penitentiary reopened a 50-year-old unit to provide the prison system with enough capacity to avoid overcrowding. While that provides a temporary solution, administrators would rather not invest in old units that cost more to maintain and operate and will need major repairs soon.

The plan to build a new men’s reception center was put on hold as a result of the budget crisis. During the 2012 legislative session the Legislature instructed the Office of Financial Management to study the state’s prison capacity to develop a comprehensive capacity plan.

Sustainability

Washington State DOC became a national leader in sustainability, receiving recognition from institutions including the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and the National Science Foundation. It was also featured in hundreds of news articles across country, including The New York Times, USA Today, CNN, The Washington Post and every major TV station, radio station and newspaper in Washington.

The Sustainability in Prisons Project started in 2005 as an informal partnership between DOC and The Evergreen State College to find ways to use sustainable practices to increase efficiency and decrease waste at prisons. They quickly developed a low-cost solution, such as having offenders scrape food waste off their plates at a minimum-security work camp. As a result the prison was able expand its capacity without having to increase its wastewater capacity. That inspired the staff and partners to find other sustainable solutions.

The agency was already following a directive from the Governor to follow LEED standards on all new construction. Coyote Ridge Corrections Center became the world’s first prison to have its entire campus certified LEED gold, which reduced its energy costs and its impact on the environment.

Under the direction of Dan Pacholke, the Assistant Secretary of the Prisons Division, and Nalini Nadkarni, a Professor at The Evergreen State College, the staff members began to find other ways to decrease waste and increase efficiency. The Prisons Division decreased the number of plastic trashcan liners and paper towels it purchased and decreased its use of Styrofoam in the kitchen. It had offenders start sorting garbage and composting food waste to support on-site organic gardens. It began using more push-reel lawn movers that didn’t burn fossil fuel and didn’t generate as much noise as gas-powered mowers.

The agency also began bringing in independent auditors to help identify ways to make its facilities more energy and resource efficient. In one example, Washington Corrections Center for Women’s natural gas bill dropped by more than \$244,000 in just one year. Compared to similar medium-custody prisons its

The Sustainability in Prisons Project has been featured in hundreds of news articles across the country, including The New York Times, USA Today, CNN, The Washington Post and every major TV station, radio station and newspaper in Washington.

size, Coyote Ridge Corrections Center uses 25 percent less water and wastewater per offender and uses 22 percent less energy per offender.

These granular efforts had a substantial cumulative effect on operations. From 2005 to 2011 the Department of Corrections:

Reduced solid waste to landfills by 43 percent
Increased diversion to recycling by 89 percent
Increase food waste diversion to compost 90 percent
Increased percentage of total waste recycled 68 percent
Decreased potable water use by over 100 million gallons annually
Decreased facility heating and energy consumption by 29 percent
Reduced all transportation fuel consumption by 30 percent
Reduced total Carbon emissions by an estimated 40 percent

Supporting Science and Wildlife

What’s unique about the Sustainability in Prisons Project compared to other sustainability efforts is that it includes both operational efficiency and science education projects that engage the staff and offenders.

Researchers at The Evergreen State College quickly realized that prisons make ideal locations for science projects – including endangered species recovery programs and ecological studies – because they provide a controlled environment and access to low-cost, motivated labor.

Within two years the Sustainability in Prisons Project became a key contributor to U.S. Department of Defense efforts to restore an endangered ecosystem at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. At Cedar Creek Corrections Center, the Project formed a partnership with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to rear the endangered Oregon spotted frog. The offenders were more successful at rearing healthy, full-size frogs than zoos and wildlife sanctuaries across the Pacific Northwest. Wildlife experts began asking the offenders how they were achieving a higher survivorship rate than three partner zoos. Eventually the staff, offenders and students created a more sustainable operation when they began raising the crickets they feed to the frogs, which also decreased the project costs by eliminating the need of shipping crickets from Louisiana.

At Stafford Creek Corrections Center and Washington Corrections Center for Women, offenders began propagating native prairie plants to create a new habitat for the Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly – which are being reared at Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women – at Joint Base Lewis-McChord. The combined restoration effort is critical for operations at Fort Lewis because if the Taylor’s checkerspot

butterfly becomes a federally protected species then it would shut down an important artillery range that doubles as the butterfly's habitat.

The Project formed partnerships with other agencies and nonprofit organizations to help efforts that would not be possible or as successful otherwise. Offenders at Larch Corrections Center began helping restore a salmon habitat along the Columbia River. Offenders at the Washington State Penitentiary began helping Washington State University researchers study the migration patterns of the monarch butterfly.

By 2012 all 12 prisons had dog-training programs in which offenders took dogs from local animal shelters that would have likely been euthanized and taught them how to be obedient pets so they could be adopted by local residents.

At Monroe Correctional Complex the staff formed a partnership with a local nonprofit organization to have offenders train dogs that would go on to be certified service animals. At Cedar Creek Corrections Center, offenders now train dogs that will be therapy-service animals for traumatized Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans.

Nearly all of the associated costs of the wildlife and animal programs are paid for by partner agencies or nonprofit organizations. The partnerships also provide low-cost programs that engage offenders in pro-social activities that influence their behavior. There is anecdotal evidence that having offenders be responsible for living things has a positive impact on their behavior. Researchers with the Sustainability in Prisons Project are now evaluating the programs to determine the impact they have on participating offenders, including their recidivism rate, the number of violent infractions they commit and the number of grievances they file.

In 2012 the Sustainability Project received a grant from the National Science Foundation to host a national conference. Corrections administrators, university researchers and conservation partners from Maryland, Ohio, Utah, California and Oregon came to Washington State to learn how to replicate the project.

Section 2: Community Corrections Division

Of all the divisions in the agency, the Community Corrections Division experienced the most uncertainty. At one point it was not even certain that DOC would continue to *have* a Community Corrections Division.

Secretary Vail, with support from the Governor, went to Louisville, Ky., to push for changes to the interstate compact bylaws, which were overwhelmingly approved by the national governing body.

During a two-year span, between 2007 and 2009, the division endured a string of high-profile incidents that attracted national news coverage and resulted in changes to policies and procedures, both inside and outside the agency.

In early 2007 there were three separate incidents in King County in which law enforcement officers were killed by offenders who were on community supervision.

The Community Corrections Division took several actions after the incidents. It established minimum offender contact standards for community corrections officers. If there were no beds available in a county jail then offenders would be transferred to a different jail or prison, including a minimum-security unit at Monroe Correctional Complex.

Beyond procedural changes, the agency began to rethink its communications strategy. Years of trying to avoid negative press coverage by rarely, if ever, discussing incidents that occurred in communities or prisons resulted in a hostile relationship with news media. Reporters began to rely more on information provided by confidential sources. The press coverage of incidents, particularly those in the community, became increasingly critical of DOC. The agency itself, not the offenders' actions, became the focus.

Secretary Eldon Vail, who was appointed in January 2008, instructed administrators to be more open with stakeholders, including legislators, reporters, community leaders, unions and offender families. The agency began hosting more press tours at prisons, inviting more reporters and legislators to ride along with community corrections officers, providing quicker responses when incidents occurred, visiting newsrooms and reaching out to offender families. The effort increased the agency's credibility, which helped it get through the highest-profile community corrections case in its history, which occurred on a Sunday morning after Thanksgiving.

The Interstate Compact

On Nov. 29, 2009, Maurice Clemmons – an offender from Arkansas supervised under an interstate compact – walked into a coffee shop and fatally shot four Lakewood police officers. Two days later, after the largest manhunt in Washington history, a Seattle police officer fatally shot Clemmons.

The incident prompted multiple changes, including an amendment to the state constitution.

Secretary Vail, with support from the Governor, went to Louisville, Ky., to push for changes to the interstate compact bylaws, which were overwhelming approved by the national governing body. The

changes provided all states with more authority to send offenders back if the offender poses a significant risk to public safety. It also required states to provide complete criminal histories on offenders before they agree to begin supervising them. The changes were approved less than a year after the shootings.

DOC also adapted an automatic notification system that would notify community corrections officers when offenders were released from jail. And voters overwhelmingly approved to amend the state constitution to limit bail in cases of certain high risk offenders.

Transient Sex Offenders

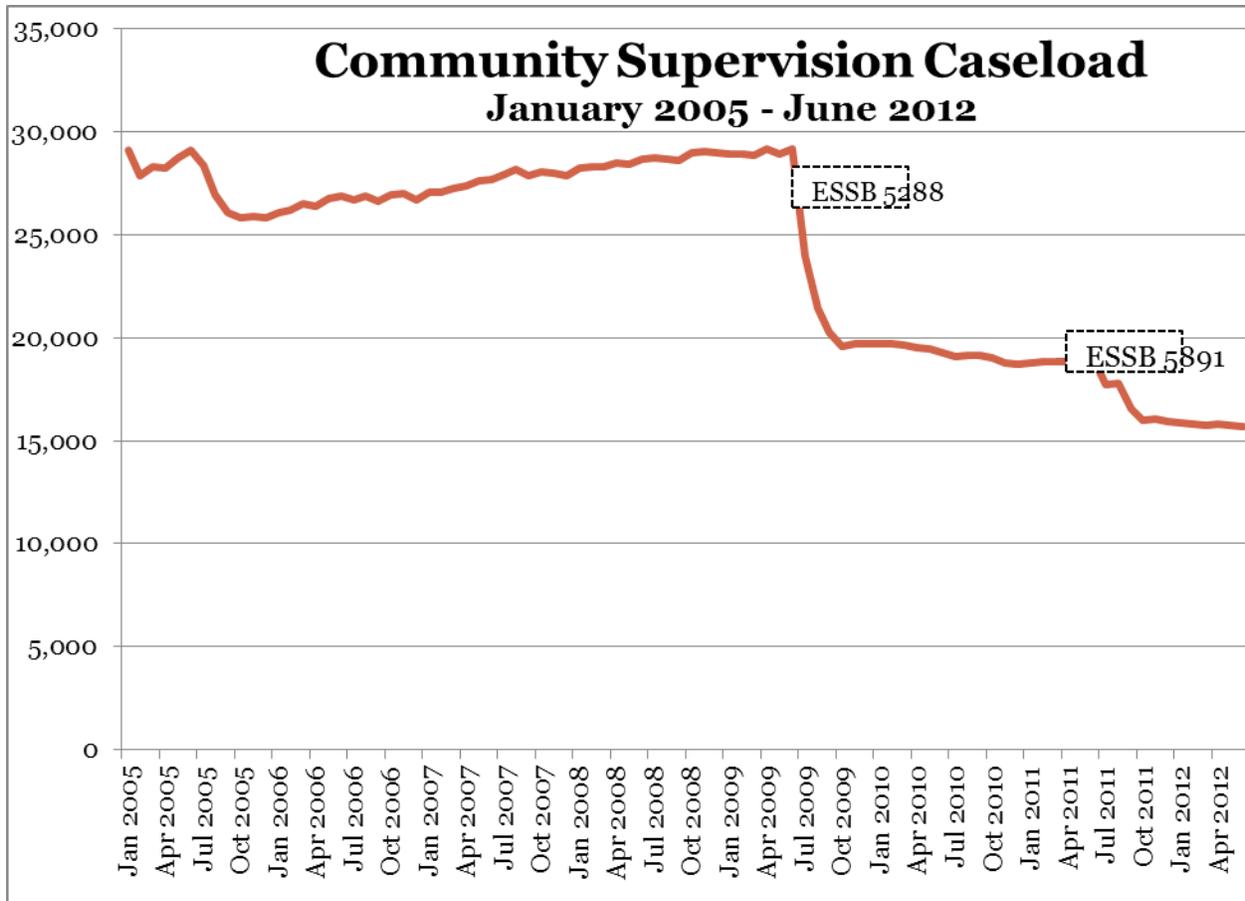
In July 2007 police arrested a sex offender suspected of murdering Zina Linnik, a 13-year-old Tacoma girl. The Governor asked Kitsap County Prosecutor Russ Hauge to lead a task force to determine ways to enhance supervision of sex offenders. The Governor supported the task force's recommendation of using GPS locators to help monitor the movement of sex offenders who do not have stable housing.

In the years since, the GPS locators have helped community corrections officer determine if sex offenders are actually homeless or if they have lied about their residency. It also helps them determine if a sex offender has been somewhere he or she is not permitted, including a victim's home, a playground or a park. In February 2009, less than two years after Linnik's death, prosecutors were able to solve the murder of a 13-year-old Vancouver girl when the suspect's GPS locator placed him at the scene of the murder at the time of death.

It was one of several examples in which the Governor assembled a group of experts from multiple fields to study an incident or issue, had them develop recommendations and then supported its implementation.

The Offender Caseload Declines

During the first five years of the Administration the supervision caseload in the community continued to climb, reaching nearly 30,000 offenders in 2009. As the state searched for ways to reduce spending it passed two laws, one in 2009 and another 2011, which ended community supervision of most lower-risk offenders. By early 2012 the caseload had dropped by nearly half, to 15,000 offenders.



During legislative hearings, Secretary Vail – along with prosecutors and law enforcement – told legislators that if the state needed to reduce spending on community corrections then it should focus on the risk to reoffend. While research showed that close supervision of higher-risk offenders decreased the likelihood that an offender would commit a new crime, there was no research that showed that minimal supervision of lower-risk offenders had any impact on public safety.

While the job losses and relocations took a toll on the staff, the restructure allowed the Community Corrections Division to change the way individual caseloads were managed. Before 2009, many lower-risk offenders were supervised by Offender Minimum Management Units in which community corrections officers had caseloads of more than 350 offenders. Offenders were only required to check in when they changed their address, and there was little or no interaction with community corrections officers. After the reductions, community corrections officers across the state had more consistent caseloads, typically between 35 and 45 offenders.

But as the state's General Fund continued to shrink in 2011 there was a serious discussion about whether or not the state would continue to supervise offenders in the community. By then the caseload had been

trimmed so much that most of the remaining offenders were either higher risk to commit a new crime or were lower-risk sex offenders who had committed violent crimes. The offender caseload had reached its bedrock.

The Governor instructed all state agencies to develop scenarios in which they would reduce spending by 5 and 10 percent if they had to. DOC administrators determined that the only way to reduce its budget by \$163 million would be to end community supervision for all offenders who were released from jails and prisons. Only offenders from other states and offenders who were supervised as an alternative to prison would still be supervised. It would have dismantled the Community Corrections Division. In Eastern Washington there likely would have been only one community corrections officer to supervise every offender in a three-county region.

Legislators discussed the possibility of having counties be responsible for supervising offenders released from jails and prisons, but city and county officials told legislators that it would take years to establish the necessary infrastructure – and that was assuming they would have the funds needed to do so.

By the fall of 2011 there was news coverage across the state about the very real possibility that community supervision for all offenders coming out of jails and prisons – including Level 3 sex offenders, high-risk gang members and offenders designated as dangerous and mentally ill – would end.

The Reengineering of Community Corrections

Secretary Bernie Warner and his Executive Staff needed to do more than simply tweak community supervision in order to prevent it from being eliminated. They had to reengineer it. Rather than supporting more proposed bills that would have decreased the offender caseload yet again, they proposed fundamentally changing the way they supervise offenders.

They based their plan on research that found that it is the swiftness and the certainty of sanctions – not the severity or duration – that most impacts offender behavior. Under the existing model, an offender on supervision who committed a violation could face a wide variety of possible sanctions, including: a written reprimand, an order to report to the field office more frequently, a referral to treatment, or go through a hearings process that could result in 30, 60, 90 or 120 days in jail. Offenders would typically sit in jail for about two weeks waiting for their hearing, so the existing sanction model was neither swift nor certain.

Secretary Bernie Warner and his Executive Staff had to do more than simply tweak community supervision in order to prevent it from being eliminated. They had to reengineer it.

A 2012 study by Washington State Institute of Public Policy found that incarceration had no impact on offender behavior. And when offenders came out of jail 30 or 60 days later they were likely to come back homeless, jobless and more of a risk to public safety. It created inconsistent practices, with some field offices more likely than others to place an offender in jail for violations. And since most offenders had spent months, or years, in confinement before, 30-plus days in jail had little impact on their behavior.

Under the proposed model, low-level violations – such as failing to report and testing positive for drugs or alcohol – would result in automatic sanctions of two to three days in jail. High-level violations – such as firearm possession or violating a no-contact order – would now be referred to local prosecutors who could file felony charges. If the offender continued to violate the terms of his or her supervision after five short stints in jail, they would go before a DOC hearings officer who could put the offender in jail for up to 30 days.

A researcher from Pepperdine University found that offenders who faced swift and certain sanctions committed fewer violations and were significantly less likely to commit a new crime. Even offenders in the control group became more compliant once they noticed that more offenders were automatically put in jail for low-level violations.

Similar sanction models in other jurisdictions had shown promising results. A researcher from Pepperdine University studied a pilot project in Seattle and found that offenders who faced swift and certain sanctions committed fewer violations and were significantly less likely to commit a new crime. Even offenders in the control group became more compliant once they noticed that more offenders were automatically put in jail for low-level violations.

The plan would also reduce operational costs because the Community Corrections Division would need to rent fewer jail beds for violators. The agency would also need fewer hearings officers since there would no longer be hearings for most low-level violations. The total estimated savings for the biennium were about \$40 million, with the goal of reinvesting about \$10 million of those

savings into programs that are proven to address offender's criminal thinking.

The reengineering of community corrections – as laid out in Senate Bill 6204 – would save the state about \$30 million during the biennium without reducing the number of offenders who are supervised and without laying off community corrections officers. It would also use sanctions that had proven to be more successful at changing offender behavior and address offenders' criminal thinking to make them less likely to commit a new crime.

With bipartisan support, the Legislature passed the bill, which the Governor signed into law in April 2012.

Section 3: Health Services Division

Some of the agency's biggest achievements in increasing efficiency and modernizing operations occurred in its Health Services Division. Even as the cost of health care soared across the country, DOC was able to reduce the average cost of offender health services while still providing medically necessary care.

In 2005 there was little centralization or standardization in health services. Health-care managers reported to the prison Superintendents and health-care staff at each prison were largely autonomous. That resulted in inconsistent practices across the Prisons Division. An offender might be prescribed a certain medication at one prison but not when he was transferred to a different prison. Providers and health-care managers at one prison might approve a type of medical procedure, but not at another prison. Administrators had virtually no data they could use to identify trends, measure performance or ensure quality.

The budget crisis that impacted DOC was a turning point for Health Services. Administrators and clinicians worked to identify areas where costs could be reduced, processes made more efficient, technology implemented to control spending and policies strengthened to eliminate waste. The efforts paid off, resulting in the Health Services Division spending below its funding authority every year since 2008 even as appropriations fell. At the same time, clinical expertise was focused on ensuring that access to and quality of health care for offenders did not suffer; these efforts continue today.

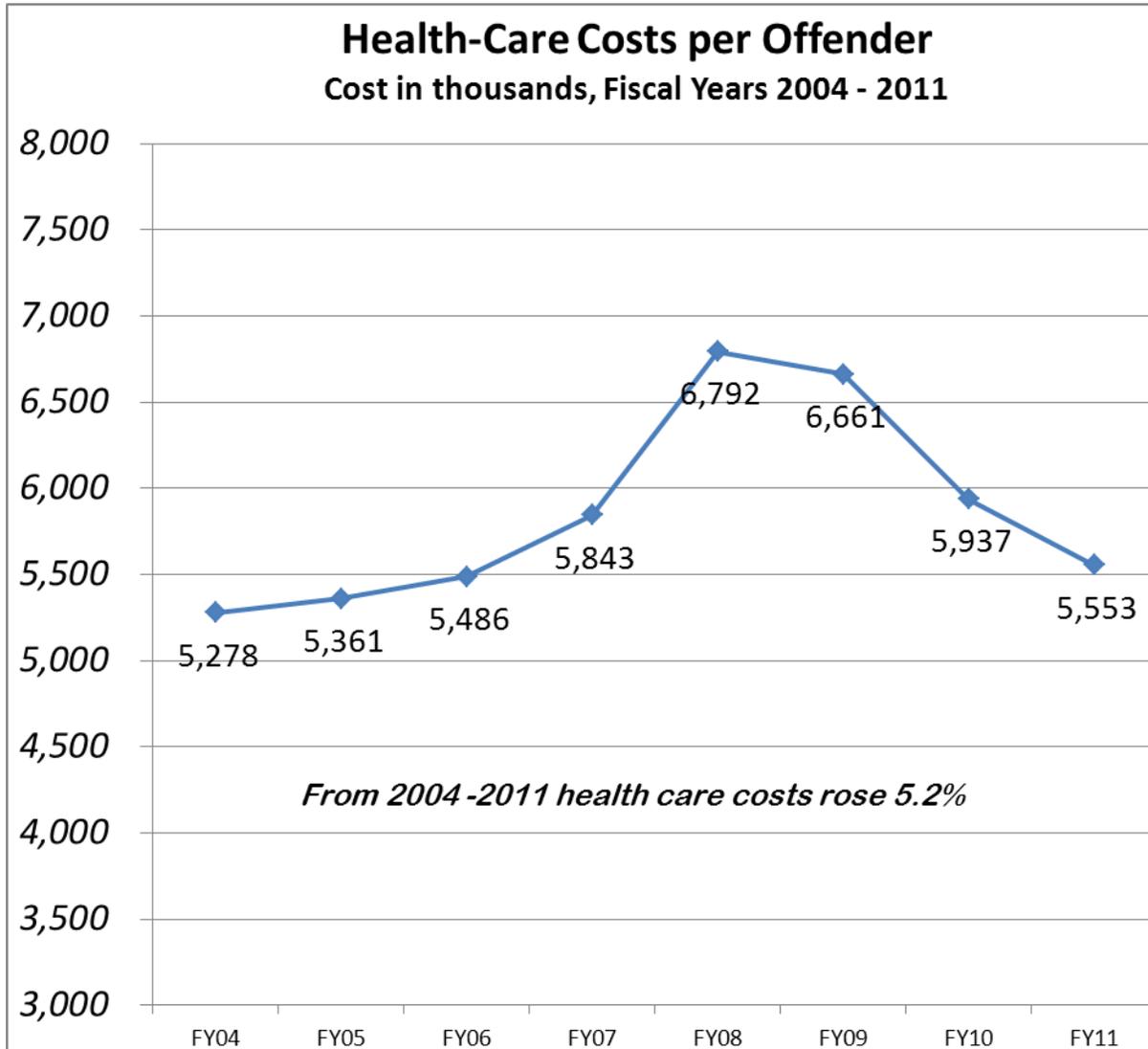
The Offender Health Plan

One of the biggest reforms in health services was the establishment of a more comprehensive Offender Health Plan that set clear parameters on what services were medically necessary. It also established standardized authorization procedures and a statewide Care Review Committee that conducts a clinical review of an offender's medical needs to determine if a proposed intervention meets the criteria established in the Offender Health Plan.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Dr. Steve Hammond, the agency's Chief Medical Officer, helped introduce a Continuous Quality Improvement model that had proven to be effective at increasing efficiency and decreasing errors in hospitals and other health care systems. The Coordinated Quality Improvement Program, referred to as CQIP, is authorized by statute which mandates that the Department of Health approve CQIP plans. The DOC plan allows the Health Services Division to monitor, review, and document quality concerns in a

manner protected from public disclosure and discovery. The resulting protection from litigation risk encourages more open reporting and discussion of quality concerns for the purpose of quality improvement. That protection against self-incrimination has allowed review teams to collect more open and honest information from staff members. It has also resulted in better action plans that helped improve practices and procedures.



Increased Efficiency

During the first four years of the administration the average cost of offender health care significantly increased, peaking at more than \$6,000 per offender in 2008. The Health Services Division took several actions that decreased costs while still providing adequate health services.

One of the biggest cost drivers was the large number of contractors hired to work in health services. Beginning in 2009 the agency started relying less on contract staff members and began recruiting health-service employees who would work for DOC. Not only did that decrease costs, it created more consistency of practice and continuity of care by having a more stable workforce.

The agency began allowing offenders to purchase over-the-counter drugs from the inmate stores so they wouldn't have to schedule an appointment with a physician for minor ailments that people in the community usually manage themselves. That encouraged offenders to spend less time in medical clinics to address minor ailments and to take more responsibility for self-care, similar to what they will be responsible once they complete their prison sentence. This change led to a reduction of more than 50,000 prescriptions per year.

The agency established a pharmaceutical formulary that resulted in consistent use and purchasing of the most cost-efficient medications. It established a centralized pharmacy management software system that markedly improved integration of pharmaceutical services across the agency. DOC also established regional pharmaceutical operations to reduce the amount of contract staff, paperwork and accounting required to maintain pharmacies at each major prison facility.

In 2009 administrators coordinated with the Department of Social and Health Services to have qualified offenders receive Medicaid coverage for medical treatment provided during hospitalizations. The agency expected to avoid about \$1 million in costs, but within its first year the agency avoided nearly \$5 million in off-site medical charges.

Challenges on the Horizon

The Health Services Division will face significant challenges in the coming years.

The offender population continues to become increasingly older as the result of longer prison sentences. Not only will that mean offenders will require more medical services and treatment, it means that the agency will need prison units that are designed to house older, more infirm offenders. Ahtanum View Corrections Center, which closed in 2009, once housed the elderly and infirm offenders, but it was not cost-efficient to operate it as a standalone facility, and it only housed minimum-custody offenders. Many of the offenders who would previously have been appropriate for housing at Ahtanum View are now housed at the Sage View Unit at Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, but this unit, which is limited to accommodating minimum-custody offenders, does not have sufficient capacity to meet current and future demands.

As the population ages, it will also change the staffing needs at some units as they need more staff members who are trained to work with an elderly population.

As the Department of Corrections moves toward better integrated care and more data-driven management decisions, the Health Services Division will need to implement an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to keep up with the rest of the health-care field. EMR is a complex information technology project that will require funding. DOC is falling behind current standards in health care – including correctional agencies in other states – by continuing to rely on a paper medical record system. The medical record file follows the offender around the state each time he or she is transferred to a different prison.

The system would also make the health-care system at DOC more efficient. Currently limits on available data on the offender population prevent DOC administrators from easily determining how many offenders have been diagnosed with diabetes, cancer or other conditions. The cost of each offenders or the cost of treating a specific condition cannot be identified. Staff resources are dedicated to filling records books with forms instead of providing direct care. An EMR would enhance efforts to identify trends, measure outcomes, and ensure and improve quality of care.

Section 4: Offender Change Division

The role of offender programs evolved over the eight-year span, from a focus on recidivism that primarily occurred in prisons to a strategy that focused on offender risk that included community corrections. It culminated in 2012 with the creation of the Offender Change Division.

In 2006, with the state facing the prospect of having to build another 2,000-bed prison in the near future to avoid overcrowding, the Legislature provided DOC with additional funds to invest in reentry programs that were designed to reduce the rate of recidivism. The Reentry Initiative focused on the idea that reentry begins on an offender's first day in prison, and targeted offenders' needs related to education, job training and chemical dependency. The initiative, led by Secretary Harold Clarke, started the discussion with the public and staff that 97 percent of offenders will be released at some point and it is DOC's role to make sure they go out better than they came in. Resources were directed to aid offenders' transitions from prisons to the community and to programs that research showed had the most impact on reducing recidivism. Some of the funds were cut as a result of across-the-board spending reductions, but the goal of increasing public safety by changing offender behavior remained.

After a three-year period in which the agency was primarily focused on increasing staff safety, increasing efficiency by closing and repurposing older prison units, and implementing laws that shrank the

supervision caseload, Secretary Bernie Warner continued to focus on those efforts while also refocusing on the agency's mission of improving public safety.

While the agency would continue to improve its process, it would also find ways to improve its product.

In the summer of 2012, Secretary Warner reorganized the agency and established the Offender Change Division. This would differ from the earlier Reentry Initiative in several ways. It would not rely on a special funding source that could potentially be cut. Evidence-based programs would be reserved for the

The agency will begin creating offender case plans that carry an offender all the way through the system, regardless of their physical location.

higher-risk offenders in prison who are closer to release. Programs that address criminal thinking and behaviors, which have proven to reduce prison misconduct and recidivism, will be offered at all custody levels. Offender change is in the focus, whether the offender is in a maximum-custody unit, work release or in the community. The expectation is a demonstrated change in behavior.

The agency will begin creating offender case plans that carry an offender all the way through the system, regardless of their physical location. And, for the first time, there would be a Quality Assurance program in place to ensure that programs were as efficient and effective as possible. Offenders' educational, vocational and addiction needs are still addressed, but the Offender Change division also targets the cognitive behavioral needs of offenders and addresses the thinking that caused them to commit crimes.

The offender-focused system relies on good assessment to identify the offenders' risk and needs, and the ability to place the offender in the right program at the right time in the continuum to change their thinking and behaviors and provide them with skills to lead a crime-free life.

Unlike in the past when offenders were only required to complete a program to earn "good time" toward their release date or earn their way to a work camp, now they would have to demonstrate changed behavior. It was no longer good enough to earn a certificate in an anger management program – now the offenders had to prove they had changed their behavior once they left the program room and returned to their living unit.

Programs became more integrated into overall prison operations. Whereas in the past a high-risk, high-needs offender who was enrolled in a cognitive-behavior class would be taken out of a program if his or her custody level changed to a higher custody level, now the offender would be more likely to stay in that program until he or she could demonstrate changed behavior. With the plan to eventually provide

programs at higher custody levels – including maximum-custody units – high-risk, high-needs offenders who are near their release dates will remain in programs regardless of where they are in the system.

The agency enlisted the help of researchers of University of Cincinnati, who are considered national experts on correctional practices and reducing recidivism. It established pilot projects at medium-custody units at two prisons in Eastern Washington, Airway Heights Corrections Center near Spokane and Coyote Ridge Corrections Center near the Tri-Cities. Offenders who were accustomed only having to demonstrate positive behavior while they were in program rooms suddenly realized that the expectation for changed behavior followed them when they went to work, the dining hall and the recreation area. It also started a pilot project at the Washington State Penitentiary's Intensive Management Unit that is designed to change the criminal attitudes and behaviors of offender's maximum security.

Demonstrating Positive Behavior

Unlike a traditional prison unit in which only a select few staff members are included in the training, all staff members in the pilot sites are trained in core correctional practices so they can all contribute to changing an offender's behavior. By including the custody staff in the training it ensured that a correctional officer would not unknowingly disrupt an offender's progress. For example, the correctional officer would know why an offender who is stressed starts counting quietly as a way to manage his anger.

Staff members across the continuum – in prisons and community corrections – are being provided with training on evidence-based and promising practices to ensure offenders' thinking and behavior are addressed, regardless of their location in the system. The goal is to prioritize programs and services that address criminal thinking and behaviors for the higher-risk offenders, up front, and as they are engaged in other pro-social opportunities, such as school and work, to continue to provide feedback, coaching and additional programming to ensure they can transfer the skills learned to settings outside the classroom.

After several years of layoffs and budget cuts, there was a temptation to not make any substantial changes in 2012. Yet ultimately Secretary Warner wanted to ensure that the agency was focusing its resources on those offenders who pose the greatest risk to public safety and connecting them with evidence-based programs that directly address their criminal thinking.

Conclusion

In state government, the Department of Corrections has historically been immune from budget cuts. For three decades DOCs across the country gradually and consistently expanded. So when they had to deal with rapidly decreasing budgets there was no institutional memory and no textbook to follow.

In Washington, the Governor's guiding principle was to do more than look for ways to reduce spending. It was a time to reform the agency so that it was both more efficient and better equipped to meet current and future demands. Many of the actions that DOC made – closing McNeil Island Corrections Center, ending minimal supervision of most lower-risk offenders – had not been possible during better financial times. And some of the reforms – particularly the reengineering of community corrections – required new laws that the Governor and Legislature supported.

Under Governor Gregoire's leadership, DOC was able to make its operations safer and more efficient.