

930602

LEGISLATIVE REPORT:

SEX OFFENDER EVALUATION PROJECT

Submitted by
Minnesota Department of Corrections
October 1993

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Minnesota Statute Section 241.67 subd. 8 (1992) the following report is submitted to the Legislature. The 1993 Legislature mandated the Department of Corrections to conduct a "community-based sex offender program evaluation project." It enacted the following legislation which defines the nature and goals of the project:

Minnesota Statutes 1992, section 241.67, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 8. [COMMUNITY-BASED SEX OFFENDER PROGRAM EVALUATION PROJECT.]

(a) for the purposes of this project, a sex offender is an adult who has been convicted, or a juvenile who has been adjudicated, for a sex offense or a sex-related offense and has been sentenced to sex offender treatment as a condition of probation.

(b) The commissioner shall develop a long-term project to accomplish the following:

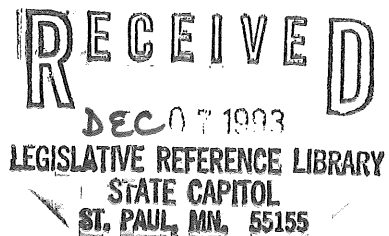
(1) provide follow-up information on each sex offender for a period of three years following the offender's completion of or termination from treatment;

(2) provide treatment programs in several geographical areas in the state;

(3) provide the necessary data to form the basis to recommend a fiscally sound plan to provide a coordinated statewide system of effective sex offender treatment programming; and

(4) provide an opportunity to local and regional governments, agencies, and programs to establish models of sex offender programs that are suited to the needs of that region.

(c) The commissioner shall provide the legislature with an annual report of the data collected and the status of the project by October 15 of each year, beginning in 1993.



(d) The commissioner shall establish an advisory task force consisting of county probation officers from community corrections act counties and other counties, court services providers, and other interested officials. The commissioner shall consult with the task force concerning the establishment and operation of the project.

DATA COLLECTED

The project began on July 1, 1993. Due to the relatively short time that has elapsed since the beginning of the project no data has been collected. Emphasis during the first four months has been placed elsewhere and will be presented in the following section.

STATUS OF PROJECT

The Department's Sex Offender/Chemical Dependency Services Unit is developing and operating the project. This report will summarize the activities to date on the project.

In May, 1993, the Sex Offender/Chemical Dependency Services Unit began developing the three position descriptions which the project required. These positions were:

1. Corrections Program and Policy Monitor
2. Research Analyst
3. Clerk I

Job descriptions for each position were written and then submitted for approval to the Department's Personnel Unit and then to the Department of Employee Relations. After the position descriptions were approved, the positions were posted for a period of two weeks. After the interview process, the most qualified and suitable candidates were offered the positions.

All of the necessary steps in the rather protracted process of creating and filling positions were successfully completed, and the three positions were filled on September 7, 1993.

The Corrections Program and Policy Monitor is Alan Listiak, Ph.D. The Research Analyst is James Kaul, Ph.D. The Clerk I is Phyllis Tillman.

Included in the legislative directive for this project is the formation of an Advisory Task Force. Because this task force will have a lot of work to do and face

a number of demands, it was decided to seek volunteers who were interested in the project and would commit to it. Also, the Department was interested in achieving as wide a representation of the sex offender catchment and treatment systems as possible. Thus, to create the largest pool of volunteers, memos were written to all Corrections District Supervisors, Community Corrections Supervisors, and District Court Administrators seeking recommendations. A notice was placed in the juvenile justice newsletter, Passing Notes, asking for volunteers.

Individuals who either were recommended or volunteered were contacted as to their interest in and ability to serve on the Task Force. A total of 31 persons formed the pool from which the final composition of the Task Force was drawn. They represented court services, the judiciary, corrections, community corrections, probation, treatment, community services, research, and victim services.

In order to create a structure and size for the Task Force which was representative as well as efficient and effective, it was decided to include at least one person from each of the state's ten judicial districts with persons from at least one of the areas listed above. When the pool was scrutinized, a second decision was made. Beside having at least one representative from each judicial district, the Task Force will include persons with particular professional expertise and/or responsibilities to provide technical and other support.

A list of the final Advisory Task Force is attached as Appendix 1.

At this point in time, Dr. Listiak and Dr. Kaul have begun to develop the basic outline of issues and directions for the project. Initial discussions have taken place with Dr. James Breiling, a psychologist with the Violence and Traumatic Stress Research Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), regarding possible avenues of support and the provision of additional services to the project. Dr. Breiling has indicated a very keen interest on the part of NIMH in exploring these possibilities.

The first meeting of the Advisory Task Force took place at the Central Office of the Department of Corrections on October 21, 1993. Only three members were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts, but they were all very interested in serving on the Task Force and plan to attend the next meeting. The meeting was a productive and exciting start for the project. The Minnesota legislature was applauded for supporting the project as part of both its commitment to the treatment of sex offenders and the prevention of further victimization, but also its serious intention to help gather the data necessary for future planning and rationalization.

The project has tremendous potential but is in need of refinement and definition of its scope and direction. The Task Force agreed that the needs of the legislature were to remain paramount in formulating the specific content of the project. The outcome of the meeting was a list of the major issues and considerations to be addressed in operationalizing the project.

Dr. Breiling of the NIMH was to have participated in the meeting by speakerphone from Washington, D.C., but unfortunately was detained at another meeting and called in just as the meeting ended. He will take part in the next meeting, which is scheduled for December 3, 1993.

SEX OFFENDER PROGRAMMING EVALUATION PROJECT
ADVISORY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

DISTRICT 1:

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