

December 22, 2012

689 Union Drive  
Hudson, Ohio 44236

Solano County Community Corrections Partnership (CCP)  
c/o Chief Probation Officer Christopher Hansen  
475 Union Avenue  
Fairfield, CA 94533

Dear CCP Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to review *Solano County's Day Reporting Implementation Plan Framework*. I have read the document a number of times, paying close attention to the different components of programming listed in the *Framework*. I have offered my observations below, however, prior to sharing those observations I have listed some of my credentials that enable me to provide this review.

I have a doctorate in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati. I have written 62 articles for publication in criminal justice journals and over 150 technical reports on criminal justice issues for government and private agencies. I have given over 300 professional presentations and trainings on risk assessment, effective correctional interventions and other criminal justice issues. I have provided criminal justice consulting services to 39 government agencies and private criminal justice services agencies, and I have evaluated over 100 criminal justice programs. I have worked in the field of corrections as a probation officer, an emergency release jail coordinator, a university research professor, and for the federal court system in the areas of policy analysis and development. My full curriculum vita is enclosed with this review.

In reviewing the *Framework*, I have focused on two broad areas: program content and program capacity. These two areas have been focal points of correctional research for over 40 years. The importance of these two areas has been demonstrated by numerous theoretical works and empirical research. As such, it makes sense for this review to review those areas. Research results of large studies have indicated that these two areas apply to any correctional program or effort aimed at reducing recidivism. In essence, the type of program is not as important as is the content the program delivers and the qualifications, training, and education of the staff delivering the program. While the program referenced in the *Framework* is referred to as a day reporting center (DRC), it deviates substantially from the traditional DRC programs. Most traditional DRC programs provide very little in terms of meaningful correctional services but provide oversight while the offenders are at the program. The program described in the *Framework* is closer to a community based correctional service center than to the traditional DRC. While the program described in the *Framework* will be providing oversight to those offenders that need it, the program will, more importantly, provide rehabilitative programming to assist

offenders in long term behavioral change. The remainder of this review focuses on the program content and capacity to deliver a sound, behaviorally-based, correctional service.

### *Program Content*

When considering the content of the program, evaluation efforts focus on reviewing the clients targeted for inclusion in programming, the types of assessment to be used, and targets and modality of the program curricula. The following paragraphs provide my observations about these areas of the *Framework*.

The research on the efficacy of correctional programs is consistent in indicating that higher risk offenders should be targeted for inclusion in correctional programming. That is, a large percentage of variability in correctional programming is determined by "who" a program targets. It is clear from reading the *Framework* that the DRC will provide services to higher-risk clients as indicated by the Level of Service Case Management Inventory. I believe this to be the correct target population for such a program.

Assessment of offenders to determine correctional programming needs is also a critical component of any correctional effort. As written, the *DRC Framework* indicates that the LS/CMI and ASUS will be used to determine offender risk and needs. These instruments, collectively, satisfy many of the criteria considered when conducting process evaluations of a correctional program. These instruments will be able to provide a thorough, standardized, and objective review of offenders' risks and needs. In addition, the instruments provide risk categories that allow for differentiation of services by risk level. Finally, the LS/CMI does provide some information on offender responsivity.

The *Framework* document indicates the following curricula will be used to target offenders' needs: *Reasoning & Rehabilitation II* (R&R II), *Thinking for a Change* (T4C), and the *Matrix Model*. Each of these programs comports with the empirical evidence in their respective areas of service. The *Matrix Model* is an intensive outpatient program. The guiding principles of this program include: a collaborative relationship, cognitive behavioral skills, reinforcement, educating family resources, development of social support, self-help programming, relapse prevention, and monitoring of drug use. All of these components are recommended as effective components of substance abuse treatment by the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The curricula targeting criminal behavior (R&R, II and T4C), are both recognized curricula, have been evaluated a number of times, and are based on cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). The curricula will provide offenders opportunities to change the way they think about criminal behavior as well as the way they think about people, places, and situations that put them at risk for criminal behavior. The curricula will also provide offenders the opportunity to develop problem solving and other coping skills that will help them reduce their risk of reoffending. Individual studies and meta-analyses of cognitive restructuring and cognitive coping skills programs consistently indicate that these programs are effective modalities in reducing offenders' criminal recidivism. Both of these modalities are represented in the *Framework* model.

Behavioral management is another area that has been identified as relating to a program's ability to reduce recidivism. The *Framework* indicates that the staff will be trained in administering reinforcement

and punishment. Staff members will further be trained in assisting offenders in learning how to self-reinforce behaviors that reduce their risk and self-punish behaviors that increase their risk. These two processes (external contingency management and cognitive contingency management by the offenders), when used properly, are supported as important components of an effective correctional intervention.

In summary, the content of the program would score very well on checklists used to assess correctional programs. The scoring in this area, if the *Framework* is implemented as designed, would be among some of the highest rankings I have observed in this area of programming.

### *Program Capacity*

When assessing program capacity as a part of a correctional program, the areas of management, staffing, organizational culture, context, and evaluation are considered. Given that the *Framework* has not yet been implemented some aspects of some of these areas are impossible to assess. However, based on the *Framework*, and the processes and events that led up to the development of the *Framework* some assessment of these areas can be made. One thing to note is that this program is designed to take place in a non-institutional setting. This is important as the most recent research on correctional interventions has indicated that community based treatments tend to produce larger treatment effects than similar programs situated in institutional environments.

The *Framework* has been developed up to this point by identifiable needs of the offenders returning to Solano County. The *Framework* has also been developed based on the perceived needs of criminal justice system stakeholders, the extant empirical research on effective correctional interventions, and apparent support from the local criminal justice system. Funding is available to operate the program for the next two years. Finally, a program evaluation of the *Framework* is planned. All of these observations provide evidence that the program has the capacity to operate in a functional and effective way. The other major area to be considered in program capacity, staff, is reviewed in the following paragraphs.

Based on available information, the individual selected to run the DRC has a Master's Degree in a helping profession and over 10 years of experience in working with offenders in correctional settings. Further, the director has supervisory experience in correctional settings. The director will be involved in selecting and training staff and direct service delivery to offenders. Other staff members will be selected with input from the director of the DRC and will, at a minimum, have a bachelor's degree and will have had expressed the desire to work with offenders in a rehabilitative setting.

Based on available information, the *Framework*, if implemented as designed, would produce a strong score in the area of Program Capacity.

### Summary

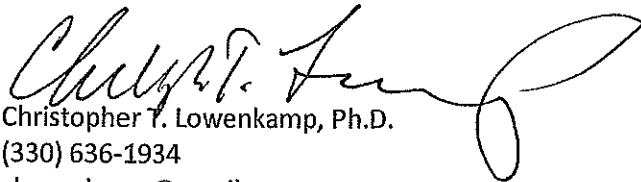
Overall the *Framework* is strong as it is based on sound experience, theory, and, more importantly, empirical research findings from decades of research in correctional settings. The program will target

the appropriate offenders, help offenders develop motivation to change, target the appropriate needs of offenders, use effective treatment modalities and curricula to facilitate offender change, and will be staffed with qualified management and line staff. The program, if scored using a standardized program review checklist, would score in the highest tier of programs and would likely produce reductions in recidivism of ten percentage points (relative risk reductions would be larger).

One major limitation to this review is that the program is not yet in operation. As such, all of my comments are based on expected operations of the *Framework*. Once the *Framework* is implemented in practice, there may be differences between the description of the program contained in the *Framework* and actual operations. Those differences, if they come to exist, would certainly impact the assessment of the quality and potential efficacy of the program. Nonetheless, the program proposed in the *Framework* should be a positive and effective addition to the correctional services offered in Solano County and should lead to reductions in recidivism for those that are enrolled in its services.

If you have any questions or comments about this review, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Lowenkamp", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Christopher T. Lowenkamp, Ph.D.

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