



**COLORADO**  
Division of Criminal Justice  
Department of Public Safety

Office of Community Corrections  
700 Kipling Street, Suite 1000  
Lakewood, CO 80215

July 10, 2017

Hello Stakeholders of Colorado Community Corrections:

I wanted to formally communicate some important and major milestones as they relate to recent work of the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council and the Office of Community Corrections in the Division of Criminal Justice. As you might have heard, we are about to embark on a long-term endeavor to advance Colorado Community Corrections through the 2017 Colorado Community Corrections Standards. We have also initiated a statewide initiative through the Program Assessment for Correctional Excellence (PACE) tool, to evaluate community corrections adherence to the National Institute of Corrections *Principles of Effective Intervention*. The new *Standards* as well as the PACE initiative, complement our existing work in funding, regulation, and technical assistance to boards and providers in Colorado Community Corrections.

House Bill 17-1147 – Purpose of Community Corrections

On March 30, 2017, Governor Hickenlooper signed into law, House Bill 17-1147. This Act, soon to become law in C.R.S. 17-27-101.5, establishes that the purpose of Colorado Community Corrections is, in part, *to further all purposes of sentencing and improve public safety by reducing the incidence of future crime through design and implementation of research-based policies, practices, programs, and standards*. It is with this purpose, as well as with the strategic work of the Division of Criminal Justice and Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council, that we share the formal publication of the 2017 Colorado Community Corrections Standards as well as the formal launch of the Program Assessment for Correctional Excellence (PACE) evaluation tool.

The Evolution of Colorado Community Corrections

Colorado Community Corrections is a rich and multi-dimensional system with many aspects to its current climate and to its deeper system culture. Our system in 2017 has evolved from a big idea in the late 1970s to use a unique state/local partnership model in order to empower local communities to contribute to the crime control goals of the State of Colorado. Over time, the Colorado Community Corrections Standards have become a central component of our system culture along with the deep rooted value of support from local governments. The 2017 Colorado Community Corrections Standards represent a major milestone in the continuing evolution of our system.



## Safe, Effective, and Sustainable Community Corrections

Now that we have the benefit of emerging science and ongoing research to guide our efforts, the impending *Standards* represent a shift in our philosophy and approach to crime control. The Division of Criminal Justice, in partnership with local community corrections boards, local governments, and the private sector have been working to integrate modern criminology and implementation research into the policies, practices, and organizational habits of community corrections programs. Our *Standards* are intended to codify our ongoing work, our intent, and our mission to advance Colorado Community Corrections into the future. It has been our purpose, at the Office of Community Corrections (OCC), to help the system evolve so that we serve as a safe, effective, and sustainable part of the larger criminal justice strategy in Colorado. Our system, through the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council, has chosen to adopt research-informed methods to crime control and community safety. The *Standards* represent that important decision.

### Why Change the Standards?

Looking back, there have been many pathways to the current *Standards*. We are first guided by the data. The Office of Community Corrections has been tracking longitudinal data for the last 15 years and we have documented increasing levels of risk, need, mental illness and criminal histories of our client population. As our population has grown to be more challenging and more complex, our short-term and long-term outcomes have reflected this change in population. This is very consistent with well-researched relationships between risks, needs, and outcomes of our client population. However, **it does impose a responsibility that we must work harder and adapt our practices to better fit the risks and needs of our modern client population.** In the last seven (7) years, our system has become smaller in population, yet larger in appropriations from the Colorado General Assembly. It is this compilation of longitudinal data that drive our decisions to advance Colorado Community Corrections. Our intent is to devote and sustain supervision and risk-reduction practices that align with the published sciences of our field. It is also for these reasons that we strive to use public funds in the most responsible manner in order to help control crime and promote wellness in local communities.

The events that have followed our last major revisions (2010) have also set the stage for the current body of professional standards for our field. In 2011, the OCC collaborated with over 100 community corrections stakeholders throughout Colorado to study the data trends of our field and make a commitment to evidence-based risk reduction methods. Also in this year, the Division of Criminal Justice initiated formal efforts to assist programs to develop, install, and implement evidence-based risk reduction methods such as Motivational Interviewing, Structured Sanctions, and Contingency Management practices. In 2012, community corrections stakeholders further collaborated with the Colorado Department of Corrections and the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budget to recommend continued strategies to advance and improve community corrections utilization. It was those efforts that led to development of the Community Corrections Progression Matrix which was designed to assist community corrections staff in better addressing the risks and needs of the client population. It was this same collaboration that led to formal recommendation to the Division of Criminal Justice to develop evidence-based and research-informed *Standards*. In this same year, I encouraged local communities and providers to develop a vision and strategy for advancing programs and services into the year 2020. In 2013, Governor Hickenlooper established **Executive Order B2013-010** which charged the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council to *recommend modifications to the Colorado Community Corrections Standards and community corrections contracts to improve the quality of programs and to enhance public safety; to identify and*



*recommend evidence-based strategies to increase success rates and to reduce recidivism in community corrections; and to provide coordinated communication to providers, boards, referral agencies, and the general public in order to facilitate the advancement of community corrections in the State of Colorado.* In 2014, the Colorado General Assembly requested that the Department of Public Safety develop a future plan for performance-based contracting for Colorado community corrections while the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) set forth a formal recommendation to revise the current *Standards* to better address risks and needs of the client population. The CCJJ also set forth a recommendation for the Division of Criminal Justice to develop a program evaluation tool that would assess each programs' adherence to evidence-based principles and practices. It was this recommendation that served as the impetus for the Program Assessment for Correctional Excellence (PACE) tool that accompanies the *Standards*. In 2015, the Results First Analysis of the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budget led to formal action of the General Assembly to fund the develop and implementation of the PACE tool for our field. In that same year the OCC begun revisions of the *Standards* with a subcommittee of the Advisory Council which worked throughout 2016. Finally, in 2017, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 17-1147 into law which set forth a new statutory purpose of Colorado Community Corrections which reads, in part, to *improve public safety by reducing the incidence of future crime through the design and implementation of research-based policies, practices, programs and standards.* These *Standards* comprise the total efforts to respond to these consecutive legislative, executive, and strategic directions to modernize the practices and policies of community corrections in our state.

It is my strong belief that the *Standards* also serve ethical and human purposes. Those purposes are to provide better services to community corrections clients; to further develop and professionalize community corrections staff; and to provide better crime control to victims and communities. **Simply put, it's the right thing to do in order to promote wellness among the human lives that are touched by crime.**

Finally, it is also my firm belief, that these *Standards* also provide a genuine opportunity for community corrections in Colorado to serve as a national model for offender risk reduction. I believe that our system is a *good* one and these *Standards* provide an opportunity for providers to become *great*. I believe that while change is an inevitable phenomenon in our system, progress is a choice; and we choose to be progressive and forward-thinking in our continuing evolution as a system. I believe that these *Standards* help to achieve a vision of the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council that was set forth in 2009 and that they serve as an artifact of a cultural paradigm shift in community corrections strategy.

#### The Process of System Advancement and Change

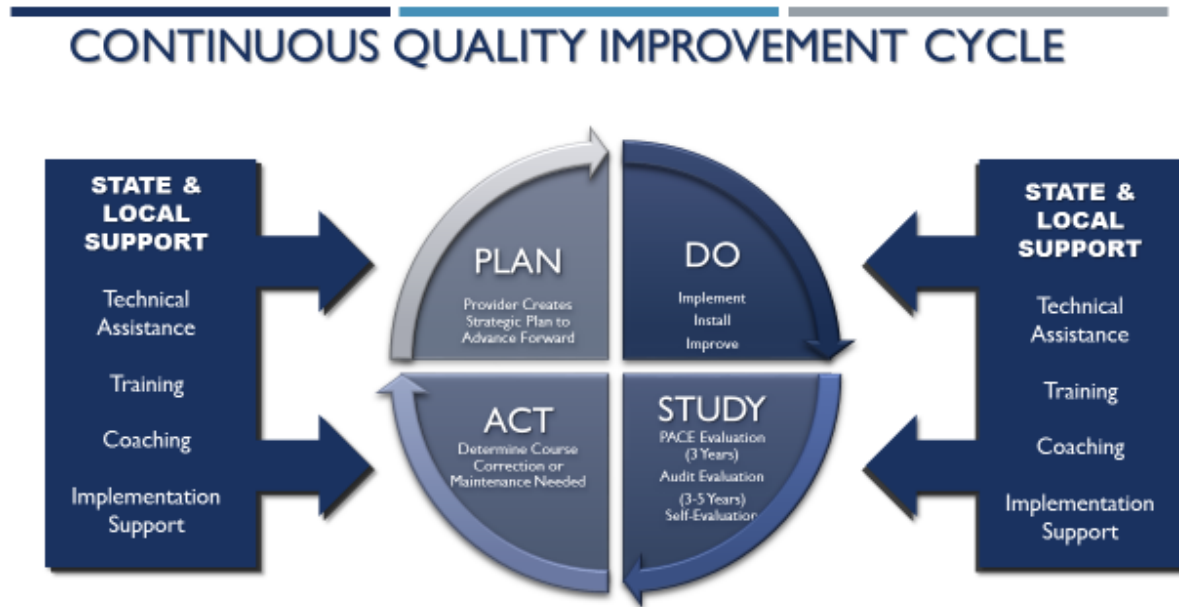
With all that in mind, **the change to these Standards from our 2010 model will be neither easy nor immediate. I encourage all stakeholders of community corrections to exercise patience and tolerance as providers work toward adherence to the new Standards.** Some Standards will take much longer than others to implement and the changes to our practices will take several years to habitualize. It will require substantial effort among providers, boards, local governments, and the OCC. Concurrently, **I also strongly encourage the leadership of community corrections providers throughout the State of Colorado to apply focused, intentional, assertive, and authentic initiative in order to align practices with the goals and expectations set forth in the Standards.** Those providers who have chosen to work with the implementation efforts of the Division of Criminal Justice have been proactive in aligning practices with these Standards before they have been codified. The work ahead for all of us is as meaningful as it is challenging. The OCC commits to offering collaborative technical assistance to providers,



through the PACE evaluation and audit processes, as part of a larger cycle of continuous quality improvement.

### The Community Corrections Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle (Plan, Do, Study, Act)

The Office of Community Corrections (OCC) is committed to providing technical assistance and support as needed for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). The OCC will complete the “Study” portion of the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycle through Audits and Program Assessment for Correctional Excellence (PACE) evaluations. Following the “Study” portion, the OCC is available for technical assistance, and strategic planning, as well as implementation support to assist programs with creating internal processes for CQI cycles.



### Next Steps

The work of the OCC in the near future will focus on formal performance measurement of the *Operations Standards* commencing in early 2018. This process will parallel work that is currently underway to establish a baseline measurement of the PACE evaluation tool and several aspects of the *Behavior Change Standards* from 2017 to 2020. **Providers are advised to commence proactive and immediate work in 2017 to adhere to the *Operations Standards* in preparation for future performance measurement work. Providers are also advised to develop both short-term and long-term strategic plans, through the PACE baseline process, in order to demonstrate gradual and increasing adherence to the *Behavior Change Standards*. It is the goal and intent of the OCC to measure, track and report incremental increases in adherence to these *Standards* throughout the next decade.**



## Performance Based Contracting for Our Future

In 2015, the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council developed a formal plan for Performance Based Contracting (PBC) at the request of the Colorado General Assembly. This plan is guided by the following principles which should also be used to guide work towards adherence to the *Standards*:

**PRINCIPLE 1:** The Performance Based Contracting (PBC) model should have primary basis in the desired future state of Colorado Community Corrections rather than its current state.

**PRINCIPLE 2:** The current structure of Colorado community corrections and its historical roots have value. However, current practices and traditions should not be a barrier to achieving the future desired state of the system.

**PRINCIPLE 3:** The PBC model should be used primarily as a tool for system advancement and recognition of superior performance. While the PBC model should contain provisions for addressing low performing providers, and contractual sanctions, its primary function is not punitive.

**PRINCIPLE 4:** Public Safety is comprised of three interdependent domains:

1. Compliance with core security functions,
2. Adherence to the Principles of Effective Intervention (program quality), and
3. Program efficacy using risk-informed outcomes.

All measures used in the PBC model should center on compliance with core security Standards, risk-informed outcome measures, and adherence to the Principles of Effective Intervention (National Institute of Corrections). Together these three (3) areas comprise the general definition of Public Safety for the purposes of PBC design and implementation.

**PRINCIPLE 5:** The PBC process and its measures should be fair, objective, and transparent to all boards, providers, and general stakeholders of Colorado Community Corrections.

**PRINCIPLE 6:** The PBC model should emphasize a state and local partnership.

**PRINCIPLE 7:** Overall system advancement and performance improvement is a long-term endeavor. The baseline results should be viewed as a starting point from which the Colorado community corrections system can grow over a period of time. Stakeholders should interpret the baseline results accordingly.

## The Role of the Office of Community Corrections

The role of Division of Criminal Justice in Colorado Community Corrections is set forth in Colorado law. It is our statutory purpose to fund, regulate, and provide technical assistance to boards and providers throughout the state. While many have perceived our role to be only that of regulation and funding, the OCC stands committed to assist providers and boards with the Standards through measurement, feedback, technical assistance, training, and implementation support. While we are not the only resource for technical assistance available to providers, we invite providers to request and accept our help. For those providers that look to us to provide technical support, we commit to working with you toward a common goal of adherence to these Standards. **We hope and**



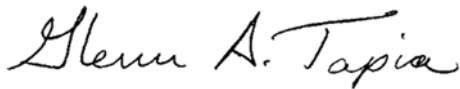
**trust that providers and boards see our role in the field as both regulatory and supportive of efforts at the local level to advance community corrections into the future.**

The State/Local Partnership and the Standards

It is my firm belief that the strength of Colorado Community Corrections originates from the state/local partnership of our unique model. Our system has evolved from one that originally emphasized *local control* to one that also now emphasizes *local support*. I continue to enjoy the partnerships with local communities and local governments to sustain and advance our field. The OCC looks forward to our continued collaborations in that regard and in the spirit of our state and local partnership.

One of the central purposes of the Governor's Community Corrections Advisory Council is to develop and continually adapt the *Colorado Community Corrections Standards* over time. Without the very complex and difficult work of the Council, and its Standards subcommittee, the OCC would be alone in the efforts to guide the work of the field. Governor Hickenlooper's Advisory Council members, and its subcommittee members, have taken highly commendable work to apply both the technical and adaptive leadership necessary to develop and codify these *Standards*. I am confident that, while not easy, this work will result in safer, more effective, and more sustainable community corrections in our state.

Respectfully,



Glenn A. Tapia, Director  
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Colorado Department of Public Safety

