

# Adult Probation Newsletter

## Welcome!

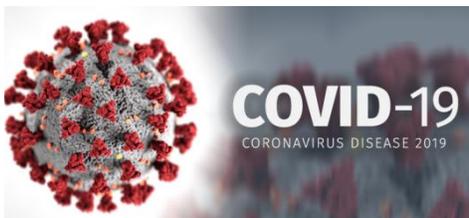
To the first edition of the Cumberland County Adult Probation Newsletter. Our office felt it was important to share with those we work with, some highlights and important information about our office. Our first newsletter highlights our COVID-19 response in addition to providing staff updates and achievements. Adult Probation looks forward to distributing a newsletter quarterly in the future.



## Department Response to COVID-19

COVID restrictions were put in place by the Governor on March 17, 2020. At that time, Probation Officers worked from home, trying to keep offenders in compliance with their Court ordered conditions. This was difficult and APO saw our offenders struggle with the uncertainty of COVID and the lack of accountability that occurred while there was no direct supervision being provided.

The Court made the decision, beginning April 27, 2020, that Adult Probation would resume full time operations using the mitigation plan previously developed by Probation. The mitigation plan allowed the department to return to full time operations with an emphasis on field contacts with offenders. As in the past, field contacts were to ensure that offenders maintain compliance with Court ordered conditions. APO also strived to be a resource for offenders by helping them cope with the COVID -19 crises (unemployment, financial insecurity, family needs, and counseling needs). The mitigation plan was developed to ensure social distancing and to allow for the health and safety of staff to be the first priority. In order to achieve these goals, the following measures were put into place:



1. POs make regular and frequent contact with offenders by making porch visits or meeting at another outside location.
2. POs now supervise alone to accommodate social distancing. Prior to COVID, PO's often supervised with another PO, sharing a vehicle and often being together in small spaces.
3. Full PPE required for all arrests and transports.
4. ORAS Risk/Needs Assessments conducted outside or by Zoom. These assessments, which are quite detailed, take a minimum of 45 minutes.
5. Offenders are often making Court appearances by Zoom. Therefore, they do not report to Adult Probation following a guilty or sentence. Following a Zoom Court appearance, POs now go to the offender's home to retrieve information and get Probation/Parole Conditions signed.
6. Administrative Hearings within the department started in November to alleviate additional court appearances. Offenders meet with the PO, Deputy Chief and Chief via Zoom to resolve technical violations that are pending court action. Thus far, 33 cases were diverted from the court calendar.

## Future Plans to Handle COVID-19

Probation Officers have been supervising offenders by having outdoor field contacts. These contacts have happened outside of resident's homes and various outdoor locations in the county.

With the cold weather arriving and our need to continue to work with and meet offenders, Adult Probation has secured 3 locations in the county to meet with our clients during the cold months. Each location provides a safe, secure setting where there is plenty of room for social distancing.

*Carlisle Location:* Hope Station will allow APO to use one of their buildings to meet with offenders for supervision meetings and to conduct ORAS/Risk/Needs Assessments.

*Shippensburg Location:* The Harbor in Shippensburg will permit APO to use their location for supervision meetings and ORAS/Risk/Needs Assessments.

*West Shore Location:* Just For Today Recovery Center in Lemoyne will be our West Shore location to meet with offenders.

## Probation Officer Accomplishments

Angie Chiara-Williams received her MINT Certification (Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers) on October 22, 2020. This group of select individuals come from a wide range of diverse and international backgrounds and apply MI in a variety of settings. The mission of MINT is to provide good practice in the use, research and training of Motivational Interviewing.

Angie has been instrumental in teaching and practicing MI skills with Cumberland County Adult Probation. She has trained all Cumberland County PO's in Motivational Interviewing I and II. Angie has trained Dauphin County and Somerset County Probation in Motivational Interviewing as well.

Will Gilfus became a Master Instructor in Firearms through the State's Firearms Education and Training Commission in September of 2020. This allows Will to keep our certified firearms PO's up to date on their training and requirements. During Adult Probation's last firearms qualification in October of 2020, PO's Whitney Monn and Nate Fazenbaker shot perfect scores of 300.

### Four Key Principles of MI



## EBP Initiative

Evidence Based Practices are research based practices that have been shown through rigorous scientific evaluation to be effective at achieving a desired outcome. The use of evidence based practices were first introduced to the medical field in the 1990s as a way to improve patient outcomes. The concept was overwhelmingly successful and quickly spread to other professions, including community corrections in the early 2000s. Shortly thereafter, the use of evidence based practices in probation/parole became widely recognized as an effective method to reduce recidivism. A very desired outcome because with reduced recidivism offenders became more productive, neighborhoods are safer, and cost of incarceration is reduced. Agencies using EBP observed up to 20% reductions in recidivism rates by using practices such as, assessment, case planning, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention, and Motivational Interviewing.

The department's endeavor into evidence based practices occurred in 2016 with the implementation of the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) A validated assessment instrument developed by the University of Cincinnati that predicts the risk and needs of criminal offenders. The research shows that the use of an assessment instrument in combination with the probation officer's professional judgement is the most effective way to predict future criminal behavior and a critical component for successful programming. The probation officer administers the ORAS at various stages during the course of supervision through a face to face interview with the offender followed by verification of information. At the onset of supervision, the offender is assessed to determine the supervision level and types of intervention used throughout the period of probation/parole. Offenders scoring moderate or high risk receive the most attention from officers while more of a "hands off" approach is provided to low risk offenders.



thank you!

Finally, we need to mention our Support Staff who have done so much over the last few months to keep our office running efficiently. Although we have limited the amount of people in the office, the phone calls, paperwork and other demands have not slowed down for the Support Staff. We appreciate all you do ladies!!



## Our Vision

The Cumberland County Adult Probation Office is committed to rebuilding the lives of the people we serve to provide for healthier and safer communities.

## Our Mission

To increase the quality of life of offenders by focusing and building on their strengths and working towards reducing their thinking errors and harmful behavior patterns. Our office is focused on meeting the individual needs of our offenders through the use of Evidenced-Based practices by utilizing opportunities for offender rehabilitation and treatment. By doing this, we will be able to reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

## Guiding Principles

- Engages collaboratively with our stakeholders and the community
- Honors the belief that people can change
- We value impartiality, accountability, professionalism and a strong work ethic
- Promotes honest, respectful and forthright communication
- Integrity and ethical conduct is essential at all times