

Projected Prison Population December, 1999

These projections do not include adjustments for new Sentencing Guidelines or the impact of the Truth in Sentencing (TIS) law on prison admission and Time Served. As the impact of the statutory changes becomes apparent, these projections will be revised. However, the expected impact of TIS on the CRP population has been included.

<u>End of Quarter</u>	<u>12/99 Projection</u>	<u>New Sentencing Guidelines Impact</u>	<u>Truth in Sentencing Impact on Admissions & Time Served</u>	<u>Subtract Estimated CRP including TIS impact</u>	<u>Projected Prison/Camp Population</u>	<u>Yearly Growth</u>
3/00	47,006	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	2,050	44,956	
6/00	47,398	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	2,000	45,398	
9/00	47,592	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,950	45,642	
12/00	47,858	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,900	45,958	1,458
3/01	48,266	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,850	46,416	
6/01	48,559	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,800	46,759	
9/01	48,761	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,750	47,011	
12/01	49,003	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,700	47,303	1,345
3/02	49,339	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,550	47,789	
6/02	49,619	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,400	48,219	
9/02	49,688	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,250	48,438	
12/02	50,078	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	1,100	48,978	1,675
3/03	50,254	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	900	49,354	
6/03	50,517	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	700	49,817	
9/03	50,758	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	500	50,258	
12/03	51,059	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	350	50,709	1,731
3/04	51,283	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	350	50,933	
6/04	51,626	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	300	51,326	
9/04	51,750	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	250	51,500	
12/04	52,003	UNKNOWN	UNKNOWN	250	51,753	1,044

PRISON POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Run Date: December, 1999

Report Date: January, 2000

These projections are based on current intake and release trends. The projections assume that underlying trends, many outside the control of the Department, will continue throughout the forecast. The projections do not include estimates of the impact of new sentencing guidelines and truth-in-sentencing laws - except for the known decline in community residential program (CRP) population under truth-in-sentencing. There is no reliable way to estimate the effects of these sweeping statutory changes on sentencing and release practices until sufficient data become available. Since coverage of the new laws is tied to the date the offenses were committed, most felony sentences in 1999 were still covered by old sentencing guidelines and were not affected by truth-in-sentencing. Through the first 10 months, sentences to prison covered by new sentencing guidelines represented only 27% of new intake, and only 8% of the sentences to prison were covered by the first wave of the new truth-in-sentencing law.

In addition to the unknown impact of new sentencing guidelines and truth-in-sentencing, it should be emphasized that, based on an analysis of the last five years, many of the underlying factors that drive prison population growth will not necessarily continue to follow the 1999 trends, which could result in a larger prison population than projected. If necessary, these projections will be revised again in July, by which time the nature and extent of the impact of new sentencing guidelines, truth-in-sentencing and other key factors should be more apparent.

Current Situation

Actual prison population ended 2.9% lower than projected for calendar year 1999. A close analysis of intake and release trends shows that numerous factors, rather than just one or two, were responsible for the slower growth in the prison population, which is not expected to continue. Thus, it is quite possible that these projections could underestimate the actual growth of the prison population over the next few years, even though they do forecast more annual growth than occurred in 1999.

- **Prison intake** (other than Parole Violator New Sentence) showed a modest decline of less than 7%, which was about 550 lower than projected. The revised population projections are based on intake remaining at 1999 levels. However, whether intake will remain at that level is uncertain. First, since only 27% of prison intake in 1999 was covered under new sentencing guidelines and overall court disposition data for 1999 is incomplete, it is impossible to determine whether the decline in admissions represents a temporary drop because of the transition to new sentencing guidelines, or lower statewide felony court dispositions, or some other factors such as court processing. The possibility of higher intake in coming years becomes more of a concern when we consider that most prison cases that were covered under new sentencing guidelines were the result of plea bargains and did not include the most serious offenses. It is quite possible that prison intake will increase once the transition is complete and as new prison beds become

available. Also, although intake of probation violators stabilized in 1999 (after several years of growth), the probation population declined too. If the probation population returns to higher levels, we would expect to see an increase in the number of probation violators sentenced to prison.

- **Parole Violator New Sentence (PVNS)** intake was expected to increase moderately in 1999; but, instead, decreased by about 7%, or 140 lower than projected. This is in stark contrast to what had been a steady year-by-year increase in parole violators receiving new prison sentences since the *Young Decision* was overturned. Given the larger size of the current parole population (PVNS is partly a function of the number of parolees), further declines in PVNS are unlikely. A return to past trends (which showed a consistent year over year increase) is yet another reason for concern that prison population growth could be higher than this forecast.
- **Parole Technical Violator Returns** were expected to increase by about 16% in 1999; but, instead, they increased by only about 2%. To some degree this is due to an increase in the number of violators housed in county jails awaiting return because of prison crowding; but to some extent, it also appears that recent yearly increases in violator returns may be stabilizing, due to factors such as the deterrent effect of our tougher parole supervision policies. Again, though, parole technical violators are partly a function of the size of the parole population, so a decline is unlikely.
- **Moves to parole** were expected to decrease by about 9% in 1999 from the record high that occurred in 1998, and the projection model is tracking extremely well on this variable. However, since the number of parole movements is a function of the number of hearings and the parole approval rate, it has tended to be quite volatile in prior years. There is no guarantee that the recent stability will continue, especially since the composition of prisoners being reviewed for parole has changed in recent years.
- The **CRP** population is somewhat higher than estimated, which accounts for approximately 16% of the projection discrepancy. However, the number of transfers to CRP has been declining, and the number of prisoners who will be eligible for CRP will eventually drop because of the new truth-in-sentencing law. Further, the CRP population has not sustained a long-term increase in the past ten years.

In summary, the 2.9% error in the population projections is due to numerous factors rather than one or two; and since some of the projection model components moved in the expected directions, at least part of the error was simply caused by differences in the magnitude of the trends. In other cases, 1999 represented a shift from prior trends which makes population projection more difficult. Although the new, revised projections show lower growth than those released last year, because they are based primarily on this past year's trends, we continue to be

cautious until these trends receive more confirmation since, in the past, some of these trends have shown extreme volatility. It is also important to emphasize that, even if these trends are confirmed, the revised prison population projections show that slower growth will only extend planned bedspace by a few months because of the impact of truth-in-sentencing on CRP. Fortunately, the slower growth rate in 1999 helped the Department cope with a substantial shortage of beds in secure facilities. Without the emergency beds and leased beds in Virginia, we would have had a shortage of about 1,600 beds in secure facilities during 1999.

Prison Population Projections

Michigan's prison population projections are generated by a computerized simulation model developed originally by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency and modified and adapted for Michigan by Research staff in the Michigan Department of Corrections. The computer simulation model mimics the movement of prisoners through the corrections system and uses past practice and prior year trends to predict future events. Thus, the more practices and trends deviate from the past or show uncharacteristic patterns, the more difficult it becomes to update the projection model since there is little history against which to validate and fine tune the results. These projections will likely be revised later this year, as the impact of statutory changes becomes more apparent and we are able to more fully evaluate recent changes in intake and release trends.

Chart 1 summarizes the prison population projections through the year 2004. Given the instability of recent trends, the chart includes low growth and high growth estimates as well as the projections themselves (middle growth) to show the expected range within which actual population could fall. Table 1 shows the specific projection figures on a quarterly basis.

Michigan Department of Corrections PROJECTED PRISON POPULATION

