



**Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative**

**QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT**

Pursuant to Public Act 245 of 2008  
Section 403 (2)

**Fourth Quarter Fiscal Year 2009**

**Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI)**  
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**Section No. 1: MPRI Model Implementation Progress Snapshot**

The **VISION** of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) is that every prisoner released from prison will have the tools needed to succeed in the community.

The **MISSION** of MPRI is to reduce crime by implementing a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each offender—delivered through state and local collaboration—from the time of their entry to prison through their transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community.

The **GOALS** of the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative are to:

- **Promote public safety** by reducing the threat of harm to persons and their property by released offenders in the communities to which those offenders return.
- **Increase success rates of offenders** who transition from prison by fostering effective risk management and treatment programming, offender accountability, and community and victim participation.

**A. Creating Safer Neighborhoods & Better Citizens: A Comprehensive Approach**

Michigan is a leader in prisoner re-entry and is the first state in the nation to converge the three major schools of thought on prisoner re-entry to develop and fully implement a comprehensive model of prisoner transition planning.

The MPRI Model:

- Begins with the three-phase re-entry approach of the Department of Justice's Serious and Violent Offender ReEntry Initiative (SVORI).
- Further delineates the transition process by adding the seven decision points of the National Institute of Corrections' Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI) model.
- Incorporated into its approach the policy statements and recommendations from the Report of the ReEntry Policy Council that is coordinated by the Council of State Governments.

In this way, the MPRI represents a synergistic model for prisoner re-entry that is deeply influenced by the nation's best thinkers on how to improve former prisoners' success.

To develop the MPRI Model, Michigan had the tremendous benefit of technical assistance grants from the National Governors Association (NGA) and the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) that provide substantial resources for consultation, research, training, and technical assistance. As a result of the grant from NGA, the MPRI also utilized zip-code level parolee mapping of Michigan conducted by the Urban Institute as part of our intensive strategic-planning process. As a result, the knowledge base created by the MPRI is unprecedented.

Michigan is poised for success combining a strong mandate from the Governor, a powerful policy framework, and strong community buy in. The challenge now is statewide implementation on a scale of 10,000 prisoners per year transitioning successfully from prison.

## **B. The Three Phases and Seven Decision Points of the MPRI Model**

The MPRI Model involves improved decision making at seven critical decision points in the three phases of the custody, release, and community supervision/discharge process.

### **I. GETTING READY PHASE**

The **institutional phase** describes the events and responsibilities which occur during the offender's imprisonment from admission until the point of the parole decision and involves the first two major decision points:

*1. Assessment and classification:* Measuring the offender's risks, needs, and strengths.

#### **PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:**

Currently, every offender entering the Michigan Department of Corrections' (MDOC) Reception and Guidance Centers is assessed using the validated risk assessment, COMPAS. The COMPAS is also administered with offenders prior to parole consideration. To date, over three fourths have been assessed using this tool, and every offender transitioning home through MPRI is assessed prior to release.

*2. Prisoner programming:* Assignments to reduce risk, address need and build on strengths.

#### **PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:**

In 2008, all active programs offered by MDOC were assessed using the Program Evaluation Tool designed by MDOC in partnership with Dr. Marilyn VanDieten, Orbis Partners and Becki Ney, Center for Effective Public Policy. This tool determines the degree to which a program curriculum is likely to reduce offender risk. In 2009, COMPAS data will be used to determine program capacity, matching the evidence-based programming to address the needs and risks of offenders prior to their release.

## II. GOING HOME PHASE

The **transition to the community or re-entry phase** begins approximately two months before the offender's target release date. In this phase, highly specific re-entry plans are organized that address housing, employment, and services to address addiction, ~~and~~ mental illness, criminal attitudes and thinking and to develop pro-social connections and lifestyles. This phase involves the next two major decision points:

- 3. Prisoner release preparation:* Developing a strong, public-safety-conscious parole plan.

### PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:

Each prisoner that is assigned to an In-Reach Facility works with an Institutional Parole Agent and community-based Transition Team to develop an individualized Transition Accountability Plan (TAP) that describes the needs, goals, tasks, and activities that each offender will complete upon release. Approximately 60% of all returning prisoners transition through an MPRI In-Reach Facility. Most In-Reach Facilities are located near the home of the returning prisoner.

In 2009, MDOC is partnering with the Michigan Domestic Violence, Prevention, and Treatment Board to develop a "family-focused" model of prisoner re-entry. Research has shown that strong, pro-social supports are critical to community stability and likely to interrupt the inter-generational cycle of crime. By testing family-focused approaches, MDOC hopes to learn what works to strengthen families, encourage offender success, and keep families and communities safe.

- 4. Release decision making:* Improving parole release guidelines.

### PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:

A new Parole Readiness Assessment Report has been reviewed and the small scale implementation pilot has been completed. Within the next few weeks, the PRA will be implemented for all Learning Site cases and will become part of the packet of information provided to the Parole and Commutations Board for use in release decision making. At the same time, a preliminary validation study of the new instrument will be conducted on a cohort of offenders released 2-3 years previously.

## III. STAYING HOME PHASE

The **community phase** begins when the prisoner is released from prison and continues until discharge from community parole supervision. In this phase, it is the responsibility of the former prisoner, human services providers, and the offender's network of community and social supports to assure continued success. The Staying Home Phase involves the final three major decision points of the transition process:

**5. Supervision and services:** Providing flexible and firm supervision and services.

**PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:**

In 2006, MPRI launched the Staying Home Phase. Since that time, approximately 13,000 returning prisoners have transitioned home and MDOC has invested over \$75 million in services for returning prisoners.

MDOC Field Operations Administration has been piloting revised supervision standards. These standards are based on the principles of effective practice and are captured in the MPRI Collaborative Case Management Model. As additional parole and probation agents are trained in Collaborative Case Management throughout 2009, MDOC policy on supervising offenders in the community will be revised to reflect these new, evidence-based standards.

**6. Revocation decision making:** Using graduated sanctions to respond to behavior.

**PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:**

Using graduated responses to offender behavior has long been a practice of MDOC; however, beginning in 2006 with the launch of MPRI, additional resources became available in the community to manage to parolee behavior. As a result, technical violations of parole conditions that resulted in a return to prison have been reduced.

**7. Discharge and aftercare:** Determining community responsibility to “take over” case.

**PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:**

Working collaboratively with community-based partners and social support networks to develop strong connections with returning citizens is an important objective of MPRI and strategies for strengthening these connections will continue to be explored as offenders discharge from parole.

**Section No. 2: Early Indications of the Impact of the MPRI Model**

Given the investment made to implement the MPRI Model – with more yet to come to be fully up-to-scale – it has been very important to track early indicators that the MPRI Model will positively affect parolee behavior. Because of the commitment to data-driven practice, MDOC has tracked parolee success since MPRI was launched in 2005.

Preliminary tracking of MPRI outcomes relies on matched comparisons to baseline recidivism data, reflecting the fact that failure rates vary according to offender characteristics and backgrounds. The baseline year against which to compare outcomes was 1998 parole releases, to

ensure that the extended period for baseline outcome tracking would not reach into the genesis year of the MPRI (i.e., 2003). In that year, initial MPRI-driven changes in parole practices already began to be implemented, such as paroling most offenders in early- to mid-week to enable immediate reporting to agents and employers, adoption of graduated sanctions based on behavior and risk, and provision of more intervention options for deteriorating paroles).

In addition, the analysis is done by cohort, to reflect stages of model implementation and so that offenders are being compared to others with comparable time at risk of failure. At this point, results are presented only for the overall impact of MPRI (by cohort) because it is premature to attempt to disaggregate the outcomes by specific site or program.

In 2009, MDOC has been partnering with an independent evaluation team to develop an evaluation of the MPRI Model that will analyze other indicators of parolee behavior (such as arrest and re-conviction rates, employment retention, access to housing, degree of supportive social networks, etc.) so that MDOC and MPRI stakeholders can better understand what works to improve offender behavior and tailor the future implementation of MPRI to incorporate the lessons learned from the evaluation.

#### **A. Recidivism Levels of Offenders who Participated in the MPRI and Have Been Released**

*(UPDATE THROUGH 9/30/2009)* The follow up of MPRI-related offenders who are released to the community is being done by systematically tracking individual offender release cohorts since the MPRI is being implemented in stages to build toward the full MPRI Model. For example, the Intensive ReEntry Units (IRU's) that were implemented in 2005 were actually "precursors" to the MPRI because, while they served as a testing ground for some MPRI practices, they had not implemented the full MPRI Model.

Similarly, much of the activity for the first and second rounds of official MPRI pilot sites and subsequent initial statewide implementation was concentrated on Phases II and III of the MPRI Model because the new, dynamic risk/needs assessment instrument (COMPAS) – that is the lynchpin of Phase I at the point of reception into prison – had not been fully implemented yet. Thus, as each cohort of MPRI-related cases transitions to parole with the escalating benefit of the MPRI Model in place, it is expected that progressively improving recidivism outcomes will be apparent.

In recognition of variable failure rates among offenders with different characteristics, and in light of the fact that the prisoners chosen for the MPRI by the Parole Board tend to be moderate to high risk for re-offense, the Office of Research and Planning has imposed statistical controls on the comparisons to the overall baseline to account for the presence of offender characteristics that are demonstrated to have a strong relationship to differentiations within the baseline failure rates. These statistical controls enable the analysis to refine the comparisons to the baseline by offender subgroups with matched characteristics, rather than just comparing all cases to the overall baseline.

While this complicated undertaking will continue to be refined, Office of Research and Planning analysts have already determined that the two most significant general factors identified

so far in the differentiation between release outcomes are a history of previous return to prison as a parole violator and county of release.

In the case of county of release, the differentiation is likely driven by local prosecutorial charging and plea bargaining practices as well as local issues such as economic/employment and housing prospects within depressed areas. The formal MPRI evaluation will eventually include examination of local community dynamics such as these.

In the case of history of prior parole failure, supplementary analysis of the 1998 baseline recidivism data shows that parolees who have a history of being returned to prison as parole violators (for either technical violations or new sentences) have a 24% greater likelihood of again failing on parole when next released, compared to parolees with no prior history of parole failure. This is consistent with the risk principle, wherein if the risk, needs and strengths of past violators are not adequately addressed before again returning them to the community, then more often than not they will continue to fail until something changes. This repetitive cycle of misbehavior is precisely what the MPRI is designed to stop – via its features of dynamic risk assessment, transition accountability planning, program intervention and community in-reach in advance of the next release.

As proof of performance that the MPRI is targeting offenders who are otherwise likely to fail on parole, 51.5% of the IRU and MPRI cases paroled through July of 2009 had a history of prior parole failure, while only 34.5% of the 1998 baseline paroles had a history of prior parole failure.

**When controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk, the overall MPRI/IRU recidivism outcomes through September of 2009 show a 32% relative rate reduction in total returns to prison against the 1998 baseline (across all of the release cohorts as a group.) This translates into an absolute reduction of 2,083 fewer returns to prison so far when compared to baseline expectations (a numerical reduction that will continue to grow if these results are sustained over a full three-year follow-up period for all of the cohorts).**

Table 1 shows the more detailed status and recidivism levels of the first eleven offender release cohorts for standard IRU/MPRI releases through July of 2009. It is important to recognize that adequate follow-up time must pass before reliable recidivism outcomes can be established, since relatively few offenders are returned to prison during the first several months following release.

It is also important to reiterate that these outcome results are based on preliminary tracking methodology. They represent neither statistically significant findings derived from rigorous evaluation, nor definitive demonstration of the cause and effect of MPRI on offender success. While very encouraging, these preliminary results will eventually have to be subjected to more statistical controls and a more sophisticated array of methodologies, as well as broader outcomes measures (e.g., intermediate outcomes such as offender employment, and additional recidivism outcomes such as re-arrests and re-convictions), and of course full completion of standardized, uniform follow-up periods by each of the individual cohorts.

As of the end of September 2009, only the first 2,727 standard IRU/MPRI cases paroled in 2005 and 2006 had been released long enough to enable a full three years of follow-up as required by P.A. 245 of 2008 Section 408. This is only about 14% of all standard IRU/MPRI releases to date, and these early cases were limited to serving as a testing ground for MPRI practices since the full MPRI model had not been implemented yet at the time of their releases.

Table 1: Quarterly Status/Recidivism Levels of Released MPRI-Related Participants<sup>1</sup>

	Number of Cases To Date	Number Released Thru 7/31/09	Returned to Prison Thru 9/30/09		Baseline Returns Expected Within period		Improvement So Far Against Baseline	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>IRU 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort</b> (2005 IRU releases)	687	687	329	47.9%	389	56.6%	-60	-15.4%
<b>IRU 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort</b> (2006 IRU releases)	1,412	1,412	611	43.3%	801	56.7%	-190	-23.7%
<b>IRU 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort</b> (2007 IRU releases)	637	637	207	32.5%	320	50.2%	-113	-35.3%
<b>MPRI Pilot 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> round 1 <sup>st</sup> wave)	160	152	70	46.1%	84	55.3%	-14	-16.7%
<b>MPRI Pilot 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> round 2 <sup>nd</sup> wave)	806	806	371	46.0%	456	56.6%	-85	-18.6%
<b>MPRI Pilot 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> round 3 <sup>rd</sup> wave)	2,460	2,460	823	33.5%	1,198	48.7%	-375	-31.3%
<b>MPRI Pilot 4<sup>th</sup> Cohort</b> (2 <sup>nd</sup> round 1 <sup>st</sup> wave)	697	697	259	37.2%	337	48.4%	-78	-23.1%
<b>MPRI Statewide FY 2007 (post-IRU)</b>	698	698	178	25.5%	324	46.4%	-146	-45.1%
<b>MPRI Community Placement Program</b>	655	655	216	33.0%	332	50.7%	-116	-34.9%
<b>MPRI Statewide FY 2008 (All MPRI)</b>	5,541	5,541	1,042	18.8%	1,724	31.1%	-682	-39.6%
<b>MPRI Statewide FY 2009 (All MPRI)</b>	6,559	5,360	302	5.6%	526	9.8%	-224	-42.6%

<sup>1</sup> These are standard IRU and official MPRI releases. Specialized MPRI subpopulations, such as the inmates in the MPRI Mentally Ill Project and in the Special Alternative Incarceration (SAI) intensive reentry program will be reported separately in other MPRI-related evaluation reports.

### ***First IRU Offender Release Cohort (2005 Releases)***

All offenders released to parole from the IRU's in 2005 represent the first pre-MPRI offender release cohort that is being tracked. The first of these offenders transitioned to parole in February of 2005. A full 3-year follow-up period has now been completed for this first MPRI-related cohort. The 3-year results for this cohort show a 15% relative rate reduction in returns to prison against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure. That translates into 60 fewer returns to prison than baseline expectations, and an absolute rate reduction of 8.7% for this initial MPRI-related cohort (i.e., 47.9% returned to prison within 3 years after release, compared to baseline expectations of 56.6% returned to prison within 3 years after release, when controlling for a history of prior parole failure).

### ***Second IRU Offender Release Cohort (2006 Releases)***

All offenders released to parole from the IRU's in 2006 represent the second pre-MPRI cohort to be tracked. There are 1,412 cases in this cohort, and about 43% returned to prison through the end of September 2009. This represents a 24% relative rate improvement in returns to prison so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

### ***Third IRU Offender Release Cohort (2007 Releases)***

All offenders released to parole from the IRU's in 2007 represent the third pre-MPRI cohort to be tracked. This cohort of 637 released cases was closed out at the end of May 2007 because the IRU locations were then re-designated as "MPRI Statewide" pilot site facilities. About 33% had returned to prison through the end of September 2009. This represents a 35% relative rate improvement in returns to prison so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

### ***First MPRI Round 1 Pilot Site Offender Release Cohort***

The first official MPRI pilot site offender release cohort consisted of 160 offenders (20 at each of eight pilot sites). Six of these offenders had their paroles suspended prior to release and received continuances instead; two due to pending charges, three due to institutional misconduct, and one due to failure to complete the statutory GED educational requirement. Two more of the original 160 were paroled, but ultimately as non-MPRI cases.

These first official MPRI offenders began paroling in November and December of 2005, and all had transitioned to parole by the end of April 2006. A full 3-year follow-up period has now been completed for this first official MPRI pilot release cohort. The 3-year results for this inaugural pilot cohort show a 17% relative rate reduction in returns to prison against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure. That translates into 14 fewer returns to prison than baseline expectations, and an absolute rate reduction of 9.2% for this first official MPRI pilot cohort (i.e., 46.1% returned to prison within 3 years after release, compared to baseline expectations of 55.3% returned to prison within 3 years after release, when controlling for a history of prior parole failure).

### ***Second MPRI Round 1 Pilot Site Offender Release Cohort***

The 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of first round MPRI pilot site cases began to be released in larger numbers in May 2006, and all 806 cases had transitioned to parole by the end of September 2006.

A full 3-year follow-up period has now been completed for this second cohort of official MPRI pilot site cases. The 3-year results show a 19% relative rate reduction in returns to prison against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure. That translates into 85 fewer returns to prison than baseline expectations, and an absolute rate reduction of 10.6% for this second official MPRI pilot site cohort (i.e., 46.0% returned to prison within 3 years after release, compared to baseline expectations of 56.6% returned to prison within 3 years after release, when controlling for a history of prior parole failure.

In total, over 1,800 prisoners were targeted (paroled/engaged/ identified) for the MPRI in FY 2006, with each release cohort (4-6 month cycles) benefiting from fuller implementation of the complete MPRI Model.

### ***Third MPRI Round 1 Pilot Site Offender Release Cohort***

The 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of first round MPRI pilot site cases began to be released in October 2006, and all 2,460 had transitioned to parole by the end of September 2007. About 34% of these cases had returned to prison by the end of September 2009. This represents a 31% relative rate improvement so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

### ***First MPRI Round 2 Pilot Site Offender Release Cohort***

The 1<sup>st</sup> wave of second round MPRI pilot site cases began to be engaged with the seven new pilot sites in October 2006, and all 697 had paroled by the end of September 2007, with about 37% returned to prison by the end of September 2009. This represents a 23% relative rate improvement so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

### ***FY 2007 MPRI Statewide Offender Release Cohort***

In the first half of 2007, the IRU locations were re-designated as “MPRI Statewide” facilities, so a new offender release cohort was started in June 2007 for tracking paroles from those locations. Through September of 2007, all 698 MPRI Statewide FY 2007 cases were paroled, and about 26% had been returned to prison by the end of September 2009. This represents a 45% relative rate improvement in returns to prison so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

### ***MPRI Community Placement Program Offender Release Cohort***

The MPRI Community Placement Program (CPP) was a system of integrated transitional services coupled with rigorous drug testing and sanctions. The CPP was restricted to offenders

who were serving active prison sentences for only drug crimes or other nonviolent, non-weapons-related crimes who were already past their earliest release dates due to either previous denial of parole or earlier return to prison as violators of parole conditions.

The program consisted of four phases which assessed, referred, and placed parolees into community-based transitional residential housing and services. The initial phase was the standard MPRI In-Reach phase, followed by placement in a community-based programming center, and then eventual transition to an approved home placement (with electronic monitoring as necessary) and access to programming, assistance and services. The final phase allowed for periods of return to the community-based programming center if necessary for reasons such as rule noncompliance, family conflict or loss of home status.

Paroles to the CPP began in June 2007, and all 655 cases had paroled to the CPP by the end of December 2007, with about 33% returned to prison so far through September 2009. This represents a 35% relative rate improvement in returns to prison so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

#### ***FY 2008 MPRI Statewide Offender Release Cohort***

In FY 2008, the MPRI was implemented statewide (meaning that every county was covered by the initiative). Thus, all offenders identified, engaged and released under the MPRI during FY 2008 constituted a new comprehensive statewide offender release cohort to be tracked. A total of 5,541 MPRI Statewide FY 2008 cases were paroled, and about 19% had returned to prison through September 2009. This represents a 40% relative rate improvement in returns to prison so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

#### ***FY 2009 MPRI Statewide Offender Release Cohort***

In FY 2009, the MPRI is moving up to scale (meaning that every offender sent to prison is now being assessed under the initiative and the full MPRI model is now approaching complete implementation). Thus, all offenders identified, engaged and released under the MPRI during FY 2009 constitute a new comprehensive statewide offender release cohort to be tracked. A total of 6,559 MPRI Statewide FY 2008 cases had been identified and engaged, and 5,360 of them were paroled by the end of July 2009. Only about 6% had returned to prison through September 2009. This represents a 43% relative rate improvement in returns to prison so far against the overall baseline when controlling for a history of prior parole failure and time at risk.

### **B. MPRI-Related Offender Release Cohorts by Crime Group**

Table 2 shows the principal crimes for which sentences were being served among those offenders transitioned to parole so far from the first eleven offender release cohorts. Sentences for drug and other nonassaultive crimes are understandably the most common for these initial offender release cohorts. After successes are achieved and parole board confidence in positive outcomes is increased, it is anticipated that the mix of offenses will gradually include a higher proportion of assaultive cases.

**Table 2: Crime Groups for MPRI-Related Participants Released Thru 4/30/09**

	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Other Assaultive</b>	<b>Drug</b>	<b>Other Nonassaultive</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>IRU 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort</b> (2005 IRU releases)	42 6.1%	202 29.4%	127 18.5%	316 46.0%	687 100%
<b>IRU 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort</b> (2006 IRU releases)	65 4.6%	451 31.9%	226 16.0%	670 47.5%	1,412 100%
<b>IRU 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort</b> (2007 cases so far)	33 5.2%	194 30.5%	115 18.0%	295 46.3%	637 100%
<b>MPRI Pilot 1<sup>st</sup> Cohort</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> round 1 <sup>st</sup> wave)	0 0.0%	33 21.7%	38 25.0%	81 53.3%	152 100%
<b>MPRI Pilot 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> round 2 <sup>nd</sup> wave)	31 3.8%	217 26.9%	147 18.2%	411 51.0%	806 100%
<b>MPRI Pilot 3<sup>rd</sup> Cohort</b> (1 <sup>st</sup> round 3 <sup>rd</sup> wave)	125 5.1%	848 34.5%	414 16.8%	1,073 43.6%	2,460 100%
<b>MPRI Pilot 4<sup>th</sup> Cohort</b> (2 <sup>nd</sup> round 1 <sup>st</sup> wave)	46 6.6%	217 31.1%	123 17.6%	311 44.6%	697 100%
<b>MPRI Statewide FY 2007</b>	38 5.4%	263 37.7%	112 16.0%	285 40.8%	698 100%
<b>MPRI Community Placement Program</b>	0 0%	0 0%	186 28.4%	469 71.6%	655 100%
<b>MPRI Statewide FY 2008 (All MPRI)</b>	493 8.9%	1,795 32.4%	912 16.5%	2,341 42.2%	5,541 100%
<b>MPRI Statewide FY 2009 (All MPRI)</b>	863 16.1%	1,532 28.6%	765 14.3%	2,200 41.0%	5,360 100%

### C. MPRI Comprehensive Evaluation

Elements of the MPRI Comprehensive Evaluation are being developed and piloted at the MPRI Learning Site, which began operations in April 2009. The Learning Site is the first site at which offenders are participating in all aspects of the MPRI model, including Phase I (institutional phase), with assessment, case planning, treatment and progress monitoring. A more complete description of the Learning Site and its purpose and operations is contained in a Concept Paper, (Attachment 1). In addition to presenting an opportunity for operational testing and development, this is a chance to develop, test and implement the measurement of multiple aspects of the MPRI model and to incorporate those measures into the comprehensive evaluation.

## **PROGRESS SNAPSHOT:**

The Learning Site Evaluation Advisory Committee, comprised of MDOC staff and nationally prominent corrections researchers, has met several times to finalize a plan for the evaluation of the Learning Site and develop specifications for a contract with an outside evaluator. That process is almost complete, and it is expected that contract for the evaluation will be in place before the beginning of Calendar Year 2010. The evaluation is expected to produce its first report of findings by January 2011.

Ongoing results from the Learning Site evaluation will inform the development of the Comprehensive Evaluation of MPRI. Initial process outcomes will help in developing more general process measures and in refining measures of short, intermediate and long term outcomes and impacts. Throughout the Learning Site evaluation, data needs and sources will be developed and the data collection process (e.g. offender and staff surveys) will be refined. All of this information will feed directly into the finalization and ultimate implementation of the Comprehensive Evaluation.

Expanded Measures of Offender Behavior. Measurement will be enhanced in several areas. First, outcome measures will be expanded to include new convictions and non-prison dispositions. These enhancements will significantly broaden the range of offender behavior being measured and, as such, will provide a more comprehensive assessment of the relationship between MPRI participation and improvements in public safety.

Second, other intermediate measures of offender behavior such as employment acquisition and retention, earnings, residential stability, family support, and participation in treatment, will be developed and tracked. These measures will allow assessment of how well offender needs are being addressed and the extent to which offenders are engaging in pro-social behaviors that have been shown to reduce involvement in illegal activity.

Ten-Year Trend Analysis. While the current and expanded outcome tracking provides measurement of outcomes for baseline and current MPRI cases, it does not provide information on trends over time. Thus, a ten-year trend analysis of site-specific data will be conducted and used to enable localized interpretation of the offender behavior data, and to understand the impact that singular events can have on crime trends in specific communities.

Data will also be retrospectively collected on outcomes and characteristics of offenders that have returned to each community in the years since the 1998 baseline year in order to establish ten-year trend histories.

In addition to these basic analyses of trends, more sophisticated statistical analysis and modeling techniques will be used to identify more detailed aspects of the basic trends. For example, techniques such as Latent Growth Curve Analysis can identify different “trajectories” of change, which are valuable in developing site-specific expectations against which to compare actual outcomes, and thereby more accurately determine program effects.

Additional data will be collected on events that affect the criminal justice system such as high profile criminal events, major economic/employment downturns, and changes in disposition and return to prison rates. These data will be plotted over time and provide a contextual framework to better understand shifts in criminal justice trends.

Comprehensive evaluation of MPRI impact. The comprehensive evaluation will assess the impact of MPRI system-wide, using multiple comparison groups and extensive statistical controls to isolate the specific impact of MPRI on offender success rates. The comprehensive evaluation will build on lessons learned from the Learning Site and the enhanced measures discussed above.

The evaluation will be constructed around a survival model (also known as a hazard, time to failure, or event history model) that assesses the rates at which recidivism occurs and the time from “treatment” to failure. The survival model approach will allow comparisons of the impact of differing types and intensities of MPRI exposure for discrete groups of offenders. It also allows the inclusion of a wide array of offender level data such as demographics, risk, criminal history and program and treatment participation and performance. This combination of methods is expected to allow researchers to make well informed judgments about whether MPRI worked, for whom and, perhaps most importantly, why. Planning for the comprehensive evaluation is ongoing.

An important component of the overall research plan is enhancement of the MDOC data collection system to allow for the effective tracking of all necessary data elements. Piloting the enhanced data collection system in the Learning Site will ensure that the system is ready to be launched statewide to improve the tracking of key variables.

# Attachment 1

MPRI Learning Site  
Concept Paper



Creating Safer Neighborhoods and Better Citizens

## CONCEPT PAPER

March 8, 2009

### **Fully Implementing the MPRI Model and Evaluating its Impact on Crime through a Learning Site Approach**

In 2009, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) will use a learning site approach to fully implement and evaluate the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) Model. MDOC has developed this Concept Paper to explore how to fully implement the core aspects of the MPRI Model using a learning-site approach and to then implement a robust impact evaluation.

The Department is convinced that tremendous learning can come from this intensive implementation approach that can inform both the statewide implementation of the MPRI Model as well as the comprehensive evaluation strategy that will be used to measure the impact of the Model when it is implemented to scale. This approach will provide the evidence that is needed to convince the key stakeholders in the MPRI effort that the Model is sound and that, when fully implemented, it reduces crime.

Launching a learning site in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 will further enhance a smooth transition to a new governor's administration in FY2011. Between FY2009 – FY2011, substantial progress can be made on evaluating the alignment of practice with key elements of the Model and to evaluate the impact of the Model on crime. The Learning Site evaluation will be conducted by a third-party, independent evaluator that will continuously report to stakeholders on the major findings from their process and outcome analysis so that any suggested changes can be implemented and evaluated in real time. During this period, MDOC suggests that data can be captured and analyzed along three key dimensions:

1. *Process Measures* such as the quality of assessment and case plan development and the use of evidence-based programming;
2. *Intermediate Measures* of offender success such as housing attainment, employment, and other services as well as the quality of service delivery;
3. Preliminary findings on several cohorts of former prisoners who transition through the Learning Site against *justice outcomes* such as arrests, convictions, violations and returns to prison.

Findings from the Learning Site will be used to inform the statewide evaluation strategy for measuring the impact of MPRI on these three key dimensions. Under Governor Granholm's leadership, the statewide evaluation of the MPRI will be funded and will begin in FY2011. By the end of a new Governor's first term (2014), the statewide evaluation will have produced 5-years of data. In order to have results during this timeframe, MDOC funding that has been established for a full statewide evaluation beginning in FY 2009 will

be reinvested for this learning-site approach. This, coupled with an investment from other funding partners, will support the MPRI Model implementation and evaluation in one Learning Site.

### ***Evaluating System Change One MPRI Community Site at a Time***

It is proposed that the first learning site that will be evaluated against the model is the Kent County MPRI Community Site. Approximately 3,000 male prisoners who are currently incarcerated in the Michigan prison system are expected to return to Kent County upon release. Sixty percent, or 1,796 prisoners, are either past their Earliest Release Date, or will be at their Earliest Release Date in the next two years. In addition, over the course of the next year, approximately 500 new prison admissions from Kent County for terms of two years or less will be received at the reception center and another 59 parolees are projected to be returned to prison. Thus, the Kent County site has a sufficient number of prisoners who can transition through all three phases of the process and be evaluated against criminal justice outcomes in the next two years (See Attachment No. 1).

The Learning Site evaluation will benefit from a focus on prisoners with short terms because the largest proportion of offenders who are admitted to prison each year have terms of two years or less. Using this population also allows the third party evaluator to produce both process and outcome data during the two-year window when this data can have the most benefit in attracting the support of a new governor's administration and new legislative leaders who will take office in 2011 (in addition to the Governor's election, both the Michigan House and the Senate will be elected in November, 2010).

By the time Governor Granholm leaves office in January of 2011 there will be robust, independent evidence of the effect of MPRI on crime as well as substantial progress on the statewide evaluation which will be planned and begin implementation during her tenure. This will further enhance the already strong likelihood that there will not be a delay or major change in the continuation of the MPRI as a new Governor – and a new administration – takes over the reins of state government. As the evaluation continues over time, prisoners who are serving longer terms will also be evaluated against the Model which will provide further independent evidence of MPRI's effect on crime reduction.

MDOC is proposing to expand the learning site evaluation strategy to other sites during the next few years as part of our comprehensive statewide evaluation plan. The Learning Site strategy is designed to compliment and help drive on-going and continual efforts to take the MPRI fully up to scale. The four core components of the revised statewide evaluation plan, starting with the Learning Sites, are proposed to include:

1. ***Measures of offender behavior.*** The indicators of offender criminal behavior include arrest, conviction, and disposition and will be analyzed. Other intermediate measures of offender behavior will be analyzed such as employment retention, wage earnings, residential stability, family support, and participation in treatment. Much can be learned from the Learning Site on how to measure and analyze this data. These lessons learned will be incorporated into the statewide evaluation plan.
2. ***Ten-Year Trend Analysis, Year-by-Year, Quarter-by-Quarter.*** A ten-year trend analysis of site-specific data, available in real time, will be used to allow for localized interpretation of the offender behavior data and to understand the impact singular events can have on crime trends in specific communities. Data will also be retrospectively collected on outcomes and characteristics of offenders that have returned each community since 1998 in order to establish a ten-year trend history.

Additional data will be collected on events that affect the criminal justice system such as high profile criminal events, major corporate layoffs, changes in disposition and return to prison rates. These data will be plotted over time and provide a contextual framework to better understand shifts in criminal justice trends.

3. ***Comprehensive evaluation of impact.*** New data will be collected on characteristics of offenders returning to communities that include additional information on offender demographics, criminal risk,

criminal history, degree of MPRI Model exposure, and program and treatment dosages. Measures of impact, such as return to prison rates and time to parole failure, will be tracked and measured by MDOC and will augment the independent evaluation as ancillary but critical information.

An important component of this plan is that MDOC's data collection system needs to be enhanced to allow for the effective tracking of these variables. Piloting the enhanced data collection system in the Learning Site will ensure that the system is ready to be launched statewide to improve the tracking of these key variables.

4. **Measures of Fidelity.** As this concept paper will discuss, MDOC will pilot a Total Quality Management (TQM) system at the Learning Site to measure and improve fidelity to the MPRI Model. Key measures of fidelity include assessing staff's offender engagement skills and evaluating supervisor's use of the "coaching, counseling, and discipline" strategy for staff development.

### ***Implementing the Full MPRI Model at Learning Sites***

The MPRI Model involves improved decision making, case management, supervision, and programming at seven critical decision points in the three phases of incarceration, transition, and community supervision and aftercare. Concentrated planning and implementation resources will benefit the learning sites by rapidly increasing consistency with the full MPRI Model and allow for a robust evaluation of the full Model at the Site.

This section describes the challenges and various strategies and activities to overcome them. Overcoming these challenges will result in full MPRI Model implementation in each of its three phases, and at each of the seven key decision points. Beginning with Kent County in March of 2009, we believe that the proposed Learning Site could conform to the MPRI Model as described below.

#### ***Getting Ready Phase***

The *Getting Ready Phase* describes the events and responsibilities which occur during the offender's imprisonment from admission until the point of the parole decision.

#### **Decision Point 1. Assessment and classification: Measuring prisoners' risks, needs, and strengths.**

- *Task 1. Identify the learning site target population and immediately transfer these prisoners to the learning site facility.*

Beginning in March of 2009, MDOC will identify 240 Kent County prisoners who are in the general population and who have a Earliest Release Date (ERD) that is past or due in the next two years, and new prisoners from Kent County who are admitted to the Charles Egeler Reception and Guidance Center (R&GC) in Jackson, Michigan who have terms of two years or less. These prisoners will be transferred to the Ionia/Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility (IBC) to participate in the *Getting Ready Phase* of the MPRI Model as soon as the site is ready to provide the full range of *Getting Ready Phase* activities. Activities at IBC will be conformed to the MPRI Model so that it represents a complete *Getting Ready* site.

- *Activity 1.1. Develop recommendations for modifying the intake procedure to align with the MPRI Model and efficiently transition prisoners to the Learning Site.*

Currently, all assessments occur at R&GC before prisoners are transferred to their receiving facility. In order to begin building rapport with facility staff immediately upon intake, recommendations for revising the intake procedure will be developed, considered, and implemented during the first quarter of 2009.

Additional assessments may need to be procured and staff will need additional training to enhance their assessment skills. The development of these assessment skills will be included in the staff development plan for the Learning Site (see Task 5).

The process of identifying and transferring prisoners to the Learning Site consists of two steps. First, R&GC staff will identify Kent County prisoners being identified by R&GC staff, during the first quarter of 2009. Second, the Parole Board will begin reviewing Kent-bound prisoners who are already in the general population and are past or within 2 years of their Earliest Release Date (ERD). Appropriate cases will be transferred to IBC to participate in the full Model, allowing the Model to be implemented more quickly than would otherwise be possible.

■ Task 2. Using the COMPAS to develop the Transition Accountability Plan (TAP)

Once the COMPAS and the other assessments are complete, the Transitional Accountability Plan (TAP) will be developed with each prisoner. The TAP will include the needs, goals, tasks, and activities that each prisoner must complete to resolve his criminogenic needs and reduce his risks as identified by the COMPAS. The procedure for developing TAPs immediately after the intake assessment will be developed and implemented.

■ Task 3. Set targeted release date.

Consistent with the MPRI Model, prisoners will receive a “targeted release date” shortly after their arrival to IBC. This date will conform to the minimum sentence established by the courts. Prisoners will be asked to satisfactorily complete the tasks and activities documented in their Transitional Accountability Plan (TAP) in order to parole on their targeted release date. Positive parole is a strong incentive for prisoners to complete their assigned tasks and activities.

- Activity 3.1 Define the parole action that will be used to establish a targeted release date. Develop policies and procedures to implement these recommendations.

Several options exist for using the parole action as an incentive to modify prisoners’ behaviors, including for example, the development of individualized case plan agreements or the issuance of conditional parole. Specific procedures are being developed to define the parole action and the role of the Parole Board in the Learning Site.

**Decision Point 2. Prisoner programming: Assignments to address prisoner risk, need, & strengths.**

■ Task 4. Create IBC’s programming capacity based on the aggregate risk and need profile on Kent County offenders.

IBC is a 1550-bed, multi-level facility that houses Level I, II, and IV prisoners. IBC will dedicate one Level II unit with 240 beds to the *Getting Ready: Incarceration Phase*. Additional beds in other Level II and Level IV units will be utilized to respond to prisoner behavior and for targeted prisoners that do not receive a parole. Approximately 500 prisoners over the course of the first year (CY 2009) will be included the evaluation – either at the Learning Site or in the control group.

Once at IBC, a full range of MPRI programming will be applied to each prisoner based on individual risk and need as expected in the MPRI Model. Aggregate COMPAS data has been used to map and develop the prison programs for each criminogenic domain. The programs at IBC have also been reviewed using the Program Evaluation Tool, developed in collaboration with Drs. Marilyn VanDieten and Steve Robinson from Orbis Partners, Inc. and Becki Ney from the Center for Effective Public Policy. This tool assesses programs to ensure that principles of effective practice are built into these

interventions. The programs that meet the standards of effective practice will continue to be offered and the capacity of these programs are being expanded based on expected numbers of targeted participants. Programs that were not acceptable have been discontinued and other programs are being acquired to ensure that programming is available for all criminogenic domains.

■ Task 5. Identify and train staff and contractors to deliver evidence-based programs.

The MDOC has again partnered with Dr. Marilyn VanDieten of Orbis Partners to develop and deliver a staff skill development course on Collaborative Case Management. This week-long, intensive course builds staff's skills to interact with offenders in order to motivate behavior change and enhance offender success. The MDOC trainers began their training with Dr. VanDieten the week of October 6, 2008 and were certified as trainers in February 2009. The staff at IBC, Kent County parole, and community providers were trained in Collaborative Case Management in December 2008 in order to meet the expectations of the MPRI Model.

It is critical to develop and coach all levels of management at the Learning Site so that they can support line staff in implementing each element of MPRI and evidence-based practice. Without such staff development and coaching, those who try to implement change with their new assessment and case management skills will not have sufficient support and will be vulnerable to peer pressure and erosion of their newly enhanced abilities to work with offenders. This strategy will focus not just on the content of supervision and services, but also on the critical roles of management and careful measurement of key indicators of progress.

All staff will need basic training on quality management components to assure that MPRI principles are implemented, opportunities for improvement are identified and outcomes are measured. Skill enhancement courses include:

Skill Enhancement Courses	Audience
Motivational Interviewing*	Assistant Resident Unit Supervisors (ARUS); Parole Agents; Service Providers; Transcase Processors; Corrections Program Coordinators (CPC); Corrections Mental Health Program (CMHP) Staff
Motivating Change: Basic Cognitive Communication*	Resident Unit Officers (RUO); Corrections Officers (CO); Food Service Workers; Teachers and Instructors; Healthcare Providers; All support staff at IBC, parole offices, service providers
Supervising for Performance *	All supervisors and managers
Coaching, Counseling, and Discipline*	All supervisors and managers
Quality Management Training*	All staff
COMPAS/TAP Administration: Skill Reinforcement	ARUSs; Resident Unit Officers; Parole Agents
Delivering Evidence-Based Programs*	Service Providers; ARUSs; RUOs; COs; Others as identified

\*These courses will be developed or procured during the second quarter of FY2009. Other trainings will be identified during the course of implementation and will also need to be quickly developed or procured to ensure that staff skills meet the standards of the full MPRI Model.

■ Task 6. Develop measures of program fidelity and track progress.

As prison-based and community-based programs are developed and implemented, Total Quality Management (TQM) processes will be implemented to ensure program quality is maintained. MDOC began developing the TQM system with assistance from the Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency (MCCD) in the fall of 2008. The new TQM system will assure program fidelity, continuous improvement, and meaningful outcome data. Department wide implementation of TQM will begin with the Learning Site in March 2009. The TQM system will include:

1. Process, outcome, and satisfaction indicators for Learning Site participants.
2. Inclusive continuous improvement processes
  - Define a methodology to prioritize improvement goals
  - Periodic review of the effectiveness of continuous improvement processes
3. Provide sufficient training and technical assistance to employ quality improvement strategies.
  - Train and encourage staff to identify performance problems and recognize performance improvements.
  - Monitor the use of auditing tools used by staff.

***Going Home Phase***

The *Going Home Phase* focuses on the transition to the community and begins approximately 60 days before the offender's target release date. In this phase, highly specific transition accountability plans (TAPs) are developed to address housing, employment, and community-based services to address addiction and mental illness. This phase involves the next two major decision points:

**Decision Point 3. Prisoner release preparation: Developing a public-safety-conscious parole plan.**

■ Task 7. Re-administer the COMPAS with all prisoners serving for more than one year.

The COMPAS will be re-administered at least once a year to prisoners participating in the learning site to track changes in their criminogenic needs over time.

■ Task 8. Update Transition Accountability Plan (TAP) with community-based tasks and activities as informed by the offender, his family, his parole agent and his Transition Team.

As prisoners enter the *Going Home Phase* of the MPRI Model, the Transition Accountability Plan (TAP) will need to be reviewed and modified based on the changing needs of the prisoner. Unlike the *Getting Ready Phase* which focuses on participation in risk-reduction programming, the TAP that is modified in the *Going Home Phase* will address the prisoner's impending transition to the community.

- Activity 8.1. Transition Team and parole agent meets with all high and moderately high risk prisoners at least 30 days prior to release.

A fundamental component of the MPRI Model is the commitment to the risk and need principle which states that high and moderately high risk offenders need more intensive interventions. In keeping with this principle, high and moderately high risk offenders (as assessed by the COMPAS) will participate in "in-reach" sessions with Transition Teams at least 30 days prior to release.

The community-based services that the offender will need when he returns home will be documented in the TAP based on input from the offender, family members, the parole agents, and community providers. This TAP will be shared with all members of the Transition Team and case notes will be continually updated by Transition Team members once the offender transitions home.

Activity 8.2. Maintain family connections and re-establish them as the prisoner approaches his release date.

Because MDOC is piloting both the *Getting Ready Phase* and the *Going Home Phase* at IBC, a unique opportunity is created for evaluating how family connections can be maintained during the entire period of incarceration. Kent County is currently designated as one of Family Justice's family-focused sites and has been working to test models to strengthen family support. This work can be expanded to include family sessions that start shortly after the prisoner is incarcerated and continue through out the transition process.

**Decision Point 4. Release decision making: Improving parole release guidelines.**

■ Task 9. The Parole Board uses the COMPAS to inform their release decision.

If an offender scores as high or moderately high risk on the COMPAS, then the Parole Board will instruct the offender to participate in the intensive In-Reach process described in Task 8. These offenders will be eligible for all MPRI-funded services available in Kent County based on their risk and need profile.

Pursuant to the MPRI Model, low risk offenders will be referred to community-based services, but will not necessarily be assigned to the In-Reach unit.

■ Task 10. As a prisoner approaches his targeted release date, the Assistant Resident Unit Supervisors (ARUS) inform the Parole Board regarding his progress on completing the tasks and activities required in the TAP.

Traditionally, the prisoner's behavior during incarceration is reported to the Parole Board through the Parole Eligibility Report (PER). For purposes of the Learning Site, the PER will be revised and integrated with the Transition Accountability Plan (TAP). A new procedure will be developed by May 2009 so that it can be tested at the Learning Site.

***Staying Home Phase***

The *Staying Home Phase* begins when the prisoner is released from prison and continues until discharge from community parole supervision. In this phase, the local MPRI network of services and supports (the former prisoner, human services providers, the offender's social support network, mentors, parole agents, etc.) work together to assure continued success. The *Staying Home Phase* involves the final three major decision points of the transition process:

**Decision Point 5. Supervision and services: Responsivity to individual risk, need and strength.**

■ Task 11. Map and collect data on the full continuum of services utilized for returning prisoners in Kent County.

The Kent County MPRI team annually develops a Comprehensive Community ReEntry Plan that assesses the community for assets, gaps, and barriers to successfully transitioning returning prisoners home. Proposed solutions are then developed to maximize the assets, fill gaps, and overcome barriers.

These proposed solutions are submitted to MDOC's Office of Offender ReEntry to review and award funding for services outlined in the community's proposed solutions. Funding is awarded in any service area where gaps are identified such as housing, employment support, substance abuse treatment, healthcare, mental healthcare, adult education, life skills, etc. Kent County will receive technical assistance from MDOC and MCCD on improving the Comprehensive Community ReEntry Plan.

In addition to existing community resources and services supported by Comprehensive Plan funding, MDOC also has direct contracts with outpatient and residential substance abuse treatment providers, mental health providers, and sex offender treatment providers. All of these community-based services will be identified and integrated into a case-level, data-collection system to track all of the services received by MPRI-designated parolees.

■ Task 12. Implement Collaborative Case Management with agents and community partners.

The skills associated with Collaborative Case Management (as described in Task 5) apply across all decisions points and in all phases. These skills are fundamental to the success of MPRI. Once a prisoner transitions home; however, the network of partners is greatly expanded and the skills of each person interacting with the offender need to be enhanced in order to create an environment where the likelihood for offender success is optimized. New supervision standards and parole practices that are part of Collaborative Case Management have been piloted in Kent County for the last year. These efforts will continue as part of the Learning Site.

■ Task 13. Develop data collection procedure.

Tracking the services parolees receive must happen case by case. A procedure for capturing these services in OMNI (the case management information data system) using the agent referral process must be developed to improve the consistency and quality of the data.

**Decision Point 6. Revocation decision making: Using graduated sanctions to respond to behavior.**

■ Task 14. Evaluate and enhance programming each of the Residential ReEntry Centers.

Currently, MDOC operates two ReEntry Centers that provide graduated responses to parolee violation behavior. The programming at each ReEntry Center will be assessed using the Program Evaluation Tool to ensure it is built on principles of effective practice. The programming at these Residential ReEntry Centers may be enhanced based on the outcome of the program assessment. Additional staff training may be required to ensure that programming is delivered with fidelity.

■ Task 15. Improve data collection procedure for the Residential ReEntry Centers.

The use of Residential ReEntry Centers as a graduated response to violation behavior must be consistently captured in OMNI. Improved data collection procedures will be developed to provide this consistency. Currently, only the transfer to the Residential ReEntry Center is captured in OMNI. The offender's participation in programming while at the Residential ReEntry Centers will be tracked in OMNI as well.

**Decision Point 7. Discharge and aftercare: Determining the former offender's and community's responsibility to continue aftercare following discharge from community supervision.**

■ Task 16. Develop procedures for discharging from parole under the MPRI Model.

The process for discharging from parole under the MPRI Model has not yet been developed. Because the MPRI has only been operational for a few years, few MPRI-offenders have been in the community

long enough to have transitioned through discharge. A process for providing all relevant documentation to the offender, his family, and community-based providers and continuing participation in pro-social interventions upon discharge from parole will be developed with each offender. These processes will be developed and tested in the Learning Site.

## Evaluating the Learning Site

To take full advantage of the opportunities to apply lessons from the Learning Site, it will be important that continuous, iterative evaluation measures are collected, analyzed, and reported promptly and continuously to the Learning Site staff and other decision-makers. The purpose of this section is to suggest how a real-time evaluation can inform both the statewide evaluation strategy and the systematic implementation of MPRI up-to-scale. Considerable challenges must be resolved before such a continuous, iterative learning process can be implemented at the Learning Site.

In order for the Learning Site evaluation to be complete, the MDOC agrees that the evaluator will have full and complete access to information and data needed to complete the evaluation.

The following additional tasks describe the proposed plan for resolving these challenges so that the Learning Site evaluation can begin in 2009.

### Case Management and Data Collection Infrastructure

■ Task 17. Implement quality controls on data entry in OMNI and TAP

Monitoring and improving the quality of the data entered into MDOC's case-level information management system, OMNI, and the Transition Accountability Plan (TAP) is essential to conducting a strong evaluation. Working with the Evaluation Team and the Independent Evaluator, MDOC will develop a data quality protocol to monitor and continuously improve the data captured in OMNI and TAP.

### The Evaluation Design Team and the Independent Evaluation Process

■ Task 18. Create an Evaluation Design Team to develop the Learning Site evaluation strategy and apply the lessons learned to the statewide evaluation strategy.

MDOC has partnered with key criminal justice researchers to assist in the development of a comprehensive evaluation strategy for MPRI under the National Peer Review Team initiative that was funded by the JEHT Foundation. As a result of this process, strong partnerships have developed with several of the members of the National Review Team that has helped the department increase both the sophistication and the clarity of a comprehensive evaluation design.

The Department sees value in issuing short term contracts for FY2009 to support this partnership and formalize the MPRI Evaluation Design Team and assist with the new thinking around the site-by-site, statewide evaluation approach. The approach recommended is to first charge the Evaluation Design Team with developing the Learning Site evaluation design and then ask them to review findings from the Learning Site evaluation to inform the comprehensive evaluation of MPRI.

The Evaluation Design Team has begun this work. Team members include:

1. Dr. Timothy Bynum, Michigan State University
2. Dr. Jeffrey Morenoff and Dr. Dave Harding, University of Michigan
3. Dr. James Austin, JFA Institute
4. Dr. Pamela Lattimore, RTI International

The recommended approach is for the Evaluation Design Team to be charged with several tasks that are outlined below.

- Activity 18.1. Agree upon a plan for choosing a comparison/control group for Learning Site evaluation.

The key research question for the Learning Site evaluation will be: “Why offenders succeed or fail when they return to the community.” In part, the answer to this question rests on the findings from the process evaluation – that is, in knowing how and why the system may have failed in some cases. However, some kind of impact evaluation will also be necessary, and this raises the question of what yardstick (i.e., comparison group) should be used to comparatively evaluate the outcomes of participants from the Learning Site. Offenders eligible for the Learning Site will be randomly assigned to the Learning Site or to a control group that will serve as the comparison for the impact evaluation

- Activity 18.2. Identify intermediate outcomes to be collected.  
Intermediate outcomes will be critical in conducting both the process and outcome components of the evaluation. Some of the important intermediate outcomes include measures of employment, family reunification, substance use, and participation in community-based programs.

- Activity 18.3. Designing a plan for evaluating Getting Ready Phase by studying impact of MPRI on parole readiness.

a) Although the main focus of the Learning Site evaluation will be on why offenders fail or succeed when they return to the community site the Learning Site offers a unique opportunity to study the effectiveness of *Getting Ready* programming.

- Activity 18.4. Construct a plan for monitoring progress of evaluation.

The Evaluation Design Team will work with MDOC prior to the selection of a contractor to set up a structure for monitoring the progress of the Learning Site evaluation once it is underway and responding to any difficulties that may emerge with the design of the evaluation in its implementation.

- Activity 18.5. Submit a recommended evaluation plan to the MDOC and other funding partners.

The Evaluation Design Team will draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) for MDOC and other funding partners. Then an evaluator will be selected in consultation with MDOC and will utilize the Evaluation Design Team to assist in this solicitation process as appropriate.

- Activity 18.6. Acquire an independent evaluator to conduct the Learning Site evaluation.

Once the specifications of the Learning Site evaluation are finalized, an independent evaluator needs to be selected. This evaluator must be a highly credible and independent of the Michigan Department of Correction. The Learning Site evaluation will allow for rapid sharing of lessons learned, and will provide a structured opportunity MPRI to develop and test data collection protocols.

Very close collaboration with MDOC and Learning Site staff will need to be established to ensure the evaluation is productive and that the lessons learned are accessible and disseminated to key decision makers for the project. The MDOC will provide complete access to data and records to the evaluator as requested and needed to conduct the evaluation.

- Activity 18.6. Conduct a final review and assessment of the evaluation.

A final task of the Evaluation Design Team will be to write a brief report assessing the lessons that were learned from the evaluation, both from a policy and a research perspective. Lessons that will be garnered from the Learning Site to inform the statewide evaluation include:

- a) The best indicators of offender success;
- b) How much progress has been made in staff skill acquisition, particularly relating to offender engagement and case planning, and supervisors' skills in coaching and supporting staff in using the new techniques for offender engagement and case planning; and
- c) Whether the program has brought about a change in the cultural attitudes and behaviors in support of MPRI's goals both at IBC and in community corrections.

## **Implementing a TQM System**

- Task 19. Pilot test the Total Quality Management System.

Another key opportunity for the Learning Site is to pilot the Total Quality Management (TQM) System. As part of the MPRI Up to Scale effort leaders from inside and outside the Department have been working with the MCCD to design a TQM System that would allow staff and managers to make implementation decisions that are driven by data.

TQM measures staff skill acquisition and utilization, case planning milestones, and other process measures of Model fidelity. Because TQM activities are closely linked to evaluation activities, these two tracks will be closely linked. The following activities illustrate steps in a plan to pilot test the TQM System and use these lessons learned to inform the statewide evaluation plan. In this way, the Learning Site approach will enhance on-going efforts to take the MPRI fully up to scale.

- Activity 19.1. Inform what, when, and how to measure MPRI processes.

A draft TQM plan includes some preliminary measures of fidelity to the MPRI Model; however, these measures have not been tested. Before TQM is rolled out statewide, MDOC must be sure that the right things are being measured at the right time. The Learning Site can be used to inform this measurement process.

- Activity 19.2. MCCD reports progress on TQM to the Evaluation Team and the MPRI Resource Team to ensure that the quality measures and the MPRI process measures are in sync.

To ensure that the TQM efforts and the evaluation efforts progress in a coordinated fashion, MCCD will be in close communication with the Evaluation Team and the MPRI Resource Team, and will provide regular reports on the progress of implementing TQM.