New Approach Proposed to Reduce Recidivism and Improve Recovery among Corrections-Involved Adults with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Disorders

New York—The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center today announced the release of Adults with Behavioral Health Needs under Correctional Supervision: A Shared Framework for Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Recovery. The report is written for policymakers, system administrators, and front-line service providers committed to improving outcomes for men and women with behavioral health disorders on probation or returning to the community from prison or jail.

“There are large numbers of individuals with mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders cycling through our prisons and jails,” said Denise O’Donnell, Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance. “This report draws on the science of recidivism-reduction and what works to address mental health and substance use disorders to promote the right people getting the right integrated interventions at the right times.”

The report introduces a framework that can be used at the corrections and behavioral health systems level to prioritize scarce resources based on objective assessments of individuals’ risk of committing a future crime and their treatment and support needs. The report on the Criminogenic Risk and Behavioral Health Needs Framework was supported by the U.S. Justice Department’s National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). It was developed in partnership with the

- Association of State Correctional Administrators,
- National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors,
- National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors,
- American Probation and Parole Association, and other organizations and national experts.

“NIC recognizes the care of inmates with mental health and/or substance abuse diagnoses as a top priority for the nation’s correctional systems. Our support of the framework is indicative of the need for corrections to have comprehensive tools that guide practitioners through effective decision making, program planning, and treatment. The framework is one of many methods and processes that will aid in this endeavor. NIC is pleased to be part of these efforts,” said Director Morris Thigpen.

The report outlines the principles and practices of the corrections and behavioral health systems and a structure for state and local agencies to begin building truly collaborative responses. It dispels myths about the link between mental illness and violence, underscores that recovery and rehabilitation are possible, and calls for the reallocation of resources where they will be most efficient and effective.

“The reality of austere budgets, particularly for mental health and substance abuse services, makes it imperative that we leverage each system’s investments to produce better public health and safety outcomes,” said CSG Justice Center Chair and Kansas State Rep. Pat Colloton. “The proposed framework provides a starting point and common language for making critical decisions across systems.”

The full report, FAQ, and other resources are available at www.csgjusticecenter.org/mentalhealth/bhcorrframework. To register for an October 2, 2012 webinar about the framework, click here. Single hard copies can be ordered while supplies last from NCJRS (www.ncjrs.gov, NC# 239596).

The CSG Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. It provides practical, nonpartisan advice and consensus-driven strategies—informed by available evidence—to increase public safety and strengthen communities.