

STATE OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF ALCOHOLISM
AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

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NY TARGETS RECIDIVISM THROUGH ENHANCED ADDICTION SERVICES IN PRISONS

ONDCP Director Commends Addiction Services and Criminal Justice Partnership

NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services Commissioner Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo today presented Department of Correctional Services Commissioner Brian Fischer with specialized addiction services operating certificates for five correctional facilities, furthering the partnership between the two agencies to address the addiction problems in the state's prison population.

Appearing with the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Gil Kerlikowske, at the New York City Drug Court Conference, Commissioners Carpenter-Palumbo and Fischer were congratulated by Director Kerlikowske for New York's leadership in collaborating to address addiction and public safety.

"I commend Commissioners Carpenter-Palumbo and Fischer for their collaboration in improving quality addiction treatment behind the walls of New York's correctional facilities," said Director Kerlikowske. "By recognizing addiction as a disease and using evidence-based treatment practices, this partnership will help break the cycle of drug use, crime and incarceration, and improve both public safety and public health."

Governor David A. Paterson said, "This partnership will further advance the success of Drug Law Reform already started by OASAS and DOCS. Inmates battling addiction who receive the necessary and appropriate treatment can become productive, tax-paying citizens, which is why it's so important that these two agencies work together to protect the health and safety of New Yorkers."

As part of the Drug Law Reform implemented by Governor Paterson in 2009, OASAS and the criminal justice system will partner to develop guidelines for addiction services within 62 of the 68 correctional institutions operated by the state. This will further enhance the quality of existing programs now in operation by DOCS as OASAS provides training, evidence-based practices and technical assistance on treatment planning.

OASAS Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo said, “We know that more than 80 percent of the criminal justice population has drug or alcohol addiction issues. With the OASAS and DOCS teams working together, we are committed to providing the most effective prison-based addiction services possible for New York. We are honored to partner with Commissioner Fischer and his staff to address the core issue of addiction, improve public safety by decreasing crime related to substance use and save taxpayers money.”

DOCS Commissioner Fischer said, “Substance abuse is often at the root of the criminal acts that send offenders to prison, so treating and managing these addictions both during incarceration and afterwards is critical to helping offenders successfully reintegrate into the community. Today’s certificates represent the next step in a process, which we began with OASAS at our Willard Drug Treatment Campus, aimed at enhancing public safety and helping the participants deal with their addictions. In accordance with last year’s reforms to the Rockefeller Drug Laws, our cooperation with OASAS will provide additional effective elements of treatment to the varied and numerous substance abuse programs we already provide at many of our correctional facilities for offenders who remain incarcerated.”

Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction, said, “Under the Rockefeller Drug Law Reforms, we have finally imposed one standard of health care for persons in drug treatment programs outside prison and for persons enrolled in drug treatment programs behind walls. Commissioners Carpenter-Palumbo and Fischer should be commended for their dedication in aiding the prison population with their addiction problems. It is necessary for prisoners to receive quality services to help mitigate the potential for relapse and break the cycle of recidivism.”

Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubry, Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Corrections, said, “I applaud both OASAS and DOCS agencies and their respective Commissioners Carpenter-Palumbo and Fischer for embracing the intent of the legislation which requires close collaboration between the agencies. The end result will be better treatment outcomes for incarcerated individuals and safer communities as they return to society.”

The five operating certificates were awarded to Arthur Kill (Staten Island), Hale Creek (Fulton County), Taconic (women’s facility – Westchester County), Albion (women’s facility – Orleans County) and Gowanda (Erie County) Correctional Facilities. Three different addiction services models will be used in these five DOCS programs now certified by OASAS.

The Comprehensive Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (CASAT) model is based on an intensive residential treatment model where eligible offenders are eventually sent to community-based treatment as part of a work-release program.

The Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Treatment (ASAT) model provides six months of half-day treatment sessions, with educational and vocational programming or other programming the rest of the day. The treatment program consists of individual and group counseling, relapse prevention, and drug and alcohol education.

The DWI Treatment model operates in a similar fashion as the ASAT model. However, an evidence-based, alcohol-specific curriculum is utilized with the offenders referred to DWI Treatment.

The programs follow a model where the inmates are responsible for helping each other address the various issues related to their criminal and addiction activity. DOCS counseling staff assess the inmates' needs and work with them to develop a plan for treatment. Upon release, inmates are referred to community addiction treatment programs to continue services and address relapse triggers.

Under the new OASAS 1045 Operating Guidelines for Chemical Dependence Services Operated by the New York State Department of Correctional Services, DOCS has established additional intensive individual counseling sessions, multi-disciplinary case conferencing and treatment planning, and is working to establish clinical supervision within all addiction services.

OASAS and DOCS staff worked together to visit and assess the programs and then developed Special Operating Guidelines. The operating guidelines specify addiction service procedures such as assessment, treatment planning, documentation, and service delivery. Additionally they spell out staffing qualifications. OASAS and DOCS have agreed on the goal of increasing the number of DOCS staff members who are Credentialed Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counselors (CASAC) by OASAS.

The agencies have also partnered on a number of other initiatives to address the chronic disease of addiction, including new regulations at the Willard Drug Treatment Campus, establishment of the Edgecombe Residential Treatment Facility in Manhattan for parole violators and specialized re-entry units at Orleans, Hudson and Bayview Correctional Facilities.

Approximately 35,000 inmates participated in alcohol and substance abuse treatment annually since 2007. This represents a continued commitment to providing drug treatment services to offenders while the overall population is declining. Among offenders incarcerated on new crimes who were released to the community in 2009, 92 percent were offered treatment opportunities and 78 percent successfully completed an appropriate program or were participating in a program at the time of their release. DOCS saves taxpayers dollars by providing comprehensive services utilizing professionally trained in-house staff.

In addition to the enhancement of services through the OASAS partnership, DOCS maintains its commitment to addressing the substance abuse treatment needs of the prison population through person-centered screening/assessment and programming.

OASAS oversees one of the nation's largest addiction services systems dedicated to Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, with more than 1,550 programs serving over 110,000 New Yorkers on any given day.

Addiction is a chronic disease, but New Yorkers need to know that help and hope is available. Individuals can get help by calling the state's toll-free, 24-hour, 7-day a week HOPEline, 1-877-8-HOPENY, staffed by trained clinicians ready to answer questions, help refer loved ones to treatment and provide other vital resources to facilitate that first step into recovery.

For more information, please visit www.oasas.state.ny.us.

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