Improving Offender Success and Public Safety Through System Reform: The Transition from Prison to Community Initiative

Dale G. Parent and Liz Barnett Abt Associates Incorporated

IN RECENT YEARS policy makers have passed "get tough" sentencing laws that increased the frequency and length of prison terms. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, 49 states passed or expanded mandatory minimum sentencing laws covering a variety of drug offenses and violent crimes. Most states enacted "truth-in-sentencing" laws that required violent offenders to serve a fixed portion (usually 85 percent) of their prison terms. Many states passed three-strike laws that mandated long prison terms without parole for habitual offenders. These policy changes increased prison populations sharply. In 1985 there were about 480,000 inmates in state and federal prisons. That rose to over 1,380,000 inmates by 2002.

By the mid-1990s, prison releases also began to increase, as growing numbers of inmates reached the end of their sentences or first eligibility for release on their enhanced prison terms. In 1997, over 600,000 offenders were released from state and federal prisons. "Get tough" sentencing policies did not end prison releases—instead, they caused a *deferred or impending* explosion in the number of releases. In some places the effects of these policies have not yet been fully felt—so that the number of releases will grow even more in the future.

As prison populations were growing, states' capacities to manage increased prison releases declined. Faced with revenue shortfalls, legislatures cut appropriations, causing corrections agencies to reduce programs, services, treatments, and staffing in both prisons and community supervision. Corrections and human services agencies increasingly competed for scarce resources, thus heightening barriers to collaboration. Sentencing reforms abolished some parole boards and narrowed the releasing discretion open to many of those that remained, so that fewer inmates left prison on parole, and instead served until the end of their prison terms. The percentage of prison releases who "maxed out," and returned to the community without either post-prison support or supervision increased from about 10 percent in 1987 to over 20 percent in 1999.

The size of parole caseloads increased, and, because supervision agencies increasingly emphasized surveillance, revocation rates rose. By the late 1990s, supervision violators accounted for two-thirds of all prison admissions in some states.

State and local human services agencies were caught in the same fiscal squeeze, and responded by cutting the services they provided, and by toughening eligibility requirements. Economic conditions in the mid-to-late 1990s inflated inner city housing markets, making it more difficult for poor persons to find affordable housing. Many states adopted policies to exclude selected offenders from public housing.

In summary, many more offenders were being released from prison and were getting less structured supervision, support, and services than in the past. Critics warned that the problem would worsen in the future. Ninetyseven percent of inmates would be released from prison at some point, and many would return to communities under conditions that increased the odds they would fail—many by committing new crimes that would expose the public to greater risk of harm.

A. Genesis of TPCI

In 2000 the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) issued a request for proposals to establish the Transition from Prison to Community Initiative (TPCI). NIC accepted a proposal by Abt Associates, a private research and consulting firm in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and entered into a cooperative agreement with Abt to develop the project. Abt and NIC spent about 15 months developing a model to guide states in their transition reforms, and in 2002 selected two states— Oregon and Missouri —as test sites. In 2003 NIC expanded TPCI to six other jurisdictions— Michigan, Indiana, North Dakota, Rhode Island, New York and Georgia. During implementation Abt teamed with the Center for Effective Public Policy, the Crime and Justice Institute, and Public Policy Associates, to provide support services to participating states. In the future, NIC will continue to support TPCI implementation in about eight sites (more may be added as initial states conclude development). NIC also will provide materials, tools, and resources that other states can use to guide their own transition reforms.

B. Development of the TPCI model

NIC and Abt decided to develop a TPCI model to guide participating states through transition reforms. The model would give officials a vision to help organize and focus their efforts, and would provide a framework around which to organize systemic reforms and evidence-based practices.

We recognized, however, that NIC could not "impose" its model on the field. Rather, state officials would need to embrace the model as their own. Hence, we asked 35 expert correctional practitioners and academicians to work with us over a 15-month period to define the TPCI model. About a dozen of these persons served on our project advisory board, and the rest worked on five working groups that drafted portions of the model. One or two members of the advisory board also served on each working group.

C. Premises underlying TPCI

From the outset, the expert practitioners who worked with NIC and Abt identified several important principles that shaped the TPCI. First, they believed that TPCI's goal should be to improve public safety by reducing the risk that released offenders would commit new crimes after they return to their communities. We expected to reduce recidivism by using empirically-based risk assessment instruments to identify offenders' dynamic risk factors that could be reduced by linking offenders to evidence-based treatments or interventions while they were in prison and on post-prison supervision.

Second, they believed that preparing offenders to successfully transition from prison to the community should be a central element of prisons' missions, co-equal in importance to operating secure, safe, and cost-effective facilities. Thus, implementing TPCI would mean modifying the mission of prisons.

Third, they believed that many agencies— corrections, human services, law enforcement, and community-based groups—would need to collaborate in order to improve transition. These agencies and organizations deal with common clients—before, during, and after those clients' passage through the correctional system—who have multiple problems that consume disproportionate shares of many agencies' resources. The agencies have a common interest in improved transition and can achieve mutual benefits and improved efficiencies from working together to improve the success of released offenders.

The following data show the extent to which corrections and human services agencies serve common clients. In 1997, 35 percent of the persons in the United States with active tuberculosis infections spent some time in a confinement facility—a rate 17 times higher than among the general population. In 1999, released offenders accounted for 100 percent of the increase in demand for homeless shelter capacity in Boston. Thirty-two percent of all persons with Hepatitis C were held for some time in a confinement facility in 1996, a rate 15 times higher than for the general population. If I am a public official whose mission is to protect public health or to reduce homelessness, I can do my job much more efficiently by targeting released offenders.

Fourth, they believed that agencies would need to change the way they do business and to improve their capacity to manage changes within their organizations if transition reforms were to be successfully instituted, maintained, and refined over time. Transition reforms would change agencies' core values, policies, procedures, and practices. Agencies' staffing needs would change, thus affecting recruitment, training, retention, and supervision patterns. The flow of information (within and between agencies) would change in order to better support planning, case planning, and management. Hence, the TPCI model emphasizes organizational development.

Finally, they believed that transition reforms should be built around evidencebased practices. Thanks to extensive program development and research over the past 25 years, tools were available to effectively reform transition. TPCI could achieve its objectives by applying existing tools, rather than inventing new ones.

D. The TPCI model

This section briefly describes core elements of the TPCI model. (For a link to the complete version of the model, go to www.tpci.us.) The TPCI model includes a graphic depiction of the process by which imprisoned offenders should be prepared for transition to the community. Figure 1 shows the TPCI model. The first element is arrows (pointing from right to left) depicting the movement of convicted offenders through the criminal justice system, from sentencing through imprisonment, release from prison, post-prison supervision and services, discharge from supervision, post-supervision aftercare, and emerging as law-abiding citizens.

The second element (shown above these arrows) represents the different governmental agencies that are engaged with offenders as they flow through the criminal justice system. Human services agencies may be engaged with offenders during their movement throughout the criminal justice system. In fact, human services agencies very likely were engaged with offenders (and their families or siblings) before the crime that resulted in their current conviction and sentencing, and very likely will be engaged with the exoffenders (and their families or siblings) after they are discharged from supervision on their current sentence.

Prisons, by contrast, are engaged with offenders only from the time they are admitted to prison until their release. Releasing authorities may be engaged (in varying Figure 1 *The TPCI Model* degrees) at some point during offenders' prison confinement until their discharge from supervision, although the extent and timing of their involvement varies from state to state. Supervision agencies (in most states these are agencies that administer parole supervision) may be engaged with offenders from their preparation for release until their discharge from supervision.

Thus, the roles of agencies whose practices affect transition vary as offenders move through the criminal justice system, and the quality and content of offenders' engagement with these agencies shift over time. Offenders' problems, needs, and risks, however, move with them as they traverse the criminal justice system and as they move from stage to stage where agencies' roles, authorities, and activities shift.

The third element of the model is the phases of the transition process, beginning with an institutional phase, a reentry phase, and a community phase, shown below the arrows depicting offenders' flow through the system. The institutional phase begins with offenders' admission to prison, and continues until about six months before release. The reentry phase begins about six

months before and continues through about six months after their release from prison. The community phase begins about six months after release from prison and continues to and through successful offenders' discharge from supervision.

The fourth element of the model is the Transition Accountability Plan (TAP), which appears beneath (and which spans) the three phases. TAP uses data from assessments that identify offenders' dynamic risks, and targets selected groups of offenders for increased access to evidence-based interventions that should reduce or mitigate their dynamic risk factors, thereby increasing their odds for success in the community. For this approach to work, there must be *continuity* in programs, services and supervision as offenders move from point to point in criminal justice. TAP is a tool to provide continuity in interventions, programs and services as offenders move through the system and as different agencies become involved in or take the lead in the delivery of supervision, services or support.

Content of the TPCI model

This section will describe the elements of the TPCI model at key decision points in offenders' flow through prison, release, and community supervision. Some have noted that TPCI's principles and content could be applied more broadly—for example, in strengthening release preparation from jails (either for detained or sentenced offenders), or in the application of diversion or other community-based sanctions. NIC recognized these possibilities and would support efforts to enlarge the model to other settings. However, by law NIC is charged to work with convicted offenders, and has chosen to devote substantial effort and resources in the past to improve state correctional practices.

1. Assessment and Classification

The TPCI model begins when offenders enter prison. During assessment, officials will use empirically valid prediction instruments (which are normed for the offender population to whom they are applied) to identify individual offenders' static and dynamic risk factors. Static risk factors are predictors of future recidivism that do not change with time or with interventions. They include such things as the number and nature of prior criminal convictions, prior incarcerations, or prior probation or parole revocations.

Dynamic risk factors (also termed "criminogenic needs") are predictors of future recidivism that can be changed by means of interventions, treatments or services. Examples of dynamic risk factors include poor educational attainment, lack of job skills, cognitive dysfunction (criminal thinking errors), and poor family relationships.

The model also requires that offenders be reassessed periodically, in order to document changes in dynamic risk factors over time both while imprisoned and during community supervision.

2. Behavior and Programming

During this stage of the model, officials will develop a Transition Accountability Plan (TAP) for each offender that defines a specific set of interventions and programs that are intended to mitigate each offender's dynamic risk factors. TAPs will be completed soon after assessment results are available and will cover inmates' times in prison, in the community under post-prison supervision, and in the community after discharge from supervision. Representatives of field services and other human services agencies (state or local) that may provide interventions, services or supports will be involved in the development of TAPs for individual offenders.

In addition, the TAP will explicitly set forth behavioral expectations for each inmate, as well as consequences of both positive achievements and misconducts. This will give inmates clear, certain, and objective incentives and disincentives to influence their behavior while confined. TAP will also allow corrections officials to accurately estimate the level of resources needed at future points in time to fully implement TAPs, simply by summing the programmatic content of individual TAPs. This should give officials substantial lead-time to obtain or reallocate resources as needed.

3. Release Preparation

 About six months before each offender is to be released from prison, officials will develop a reentry component of TAP, which will cover in detail critical reentry issues like housing, employment, continuation of treatment, interventions or services in the community, and specific conditions of release and supervision. TAP's reentry component will cover about a 12-month span—six months before and six months after release. Staff from community supervision, human services agencies, and community providers, as well as the offender's family and other community support persons, will be actively engaged in drafting the reentry component.

4. Release and responses to violations

The releasing authority will assign a tentative release date to each offender in the TPCI target population soon after their admission to prison (and before the offender's TAP is prepared). The releasing authority also will describe its expectations for the offender's behavior and accomplishments, as well as its general expectations for conditions of supervision when the offender is released.

The tentative release date is a benchmark to help both officials and offenders structure the content and timing of their TAPs. Knowing when an inmate is likely to be released, officials can work backwards to determine when the inmate would need to enter particular programs in order to complete them in time for release. Similarly, the tentative release date can help officials decide when inmates might need to transfer to a different institution in order to enter a program or to build family or community ties in preparation for release.

Paroling authorities could use existing (or develop new) releasing guidelines to define tentative release dates. In states without discretionary parole release, the tentative release dates might be calculated by subtracting any available credits (e.g., credits for pre-conviction confinement, good time, or program completion) from the imposed sentence. The tentative release date is not intended to establish a new or expanded liberty interest. It is, rather, an estimated date that is conditioned upon full and timely completion of the TAP and upon good conduct by the inmate.

Finally, the releasing authority will define risk-based policies to govern its responses to violations of release conditions. These policies will provide certain responses for all substantial violations, and will rely on a graduated array of responses, so that the severity of response can be proportional to the seriousness of the violation. In the aggregate, responses to violations should reduce the number of offenders returned to prison for technical violations, thereby freeing up confinement resources that can be reallocated to other uses.

5. Supervision and Services

Supervision agencies will use risk assessment tools to establish specific supervision levels and strategies and to define case-specific conditions. They should use valid and normed empirical risk assessments that contain both dynamic and static predictors. The TPCI model does not endorse any particular prediction instrument or require that a participating state use the same prediction instruments at different stages in offenders' flow through the correctional system. However, a common risk assessment instrument would have substantial advantages—such as creating a common understanding, common terminology, and uniform data elements in information systems across different stages of the system.

Human services agencies will coordinate delivery of needed programs and support. Supervision agencies will take the lead in ensuring continuity in completion of each offender's TAP, and will perform a case management function to track progress in the completion of each offender's TAP.

Community and neighborhood groups (including faith-based and victims' organizations) and local criminal justice agencies (such as law enforcement) will be engaged as required. Supervision agencies may take the lead in establishing place-based partnerships with these groups to foster collaboration in the delivery of case-level supervision, services, support, and

surveillance.

6. Discharge

Each jurisdiction should establish policies under which offenders who have successfully completed a reasonable period of supervision will be discharged. This will give offenders substantial incentives for compliance and positive achievement, and will lower the odds of future technical violations, as well as supervision caseloads.

7. Aftercare

After offenders have been discharged from supervision, human services agencies will continue to provide case management services to monitor remaining portions of their TAPs. Former offenders will have gained skills in recognizing their need for and their ability to access services, programs and benefits administered by human services agencies.

States should take affirmative steps to remove unreasonable legal barriers that interfere with former offenders' abilities to participate in and contribute to the social, economic, and civic lives of their communities after their discharge from supervision.

E. Implementation

In 2002 NIC selected two states—Oregon and Missouri—as initial test sites for the TPCI. Oregon had launched its own transition reforms before NIC began work on the TPCI. Oregon officials served on our Advisory Board and contributed important insights and direction to the TPCI development process. We selected Oregon as an initial site largely to continue to learn from their pioneering efforts.

Missouri, on the other hand, was starting its transition reforms afresh. We selected them to get practical experience with helping states start a new TPCI planning process.

In 2003 NIC asked state directors of corrections, parole, and community supervision to submit a joint letter expressing their interest in and readiness for becoming a TPCI site. Twenty-three states responded. After screening the letters, NIC asked eight states to submit formal applications in which they described strengths and weaknesses of their systems relative to the TPCI model, current opportunities for successful transition reforms, and the extent of support from key officials and agencies.

Abt and NIC screened applications (including telephone conversations and site visits) and in June 2003 NIC selected four new TPCI states—Michigan, Indiana, Rhode Island, and North Dakota. Late in 2003, additional funds became available and NIC returned to the pool of applicants and invited Georgia and New York to join TPCI in early 2004.

F. TPCI and Participating Sites

NIC articulated several themes to guide its interaction with participating sites. First, states should do the "heavy lifting." TPCI should result in changes in agencies' missions and practices and would require a high degree of collaboration across agencies on transition issues. Such changes must come from within. States should "own" their transition reforms. During their planning, each state would tailor the TPCI model to fit their environment. TPCI is not a "one-size-fits-all" reform.

Second, because NIC has limited resources to devote to TPCI, NIC provides targeted strategic assistance. NIC provides a site coordinator to each state (selected in agreement with state officials). The site coordinator is either a project staff member or a senior-consultant who is (a) skilled in strategic planning and multi-agency collaboration, and (b) expert on the TPCI model. Each state designates a person as their contact who leads their TPCI reform efforts. The site coordinator provides strategic advice to the state contact to help them plan all stages of the reform initiative. Site coordinators also help state contacts to identify topics on which expert

technical assistance is needed and to secure that assistance from NIC or other funding sources. NIC recognizes that it might take two to four years of diligent and concentrated work for states to bring their systems into line with the TPCI model. Hence, we sign on with participating sites for the long haul.

Third, sites should implement the entire TPCI model, not just parts of it. At the same time, each state enters the TPCI with different strengths and weaknesses relative to the model, and with different opportunities (based on available laws, resources, customs, personnel) for change. Hence, each state develops its unique plan for reforming their transition process. In the end, however, all states will move their transition practices closer to that contained in the TPCI model.

Finally, NIC provides generalized information and assistance to states interested in reforming their transition practices. In late 2003, Abt started the *Reentry Blog* and the *TPCI Review,* and is currently developing a web-based inventory of relevant resources and materials. To access the *Reentry Blog* and *TPCI Review,* go to www.tpci.us.

G. States' Challenges in Implementing TPCI

States face three particular challenges in implementing TPCI. First, they must initiate, manage, and sustain collaboration among multiple state and local agencies. Second, they plan, implement and manage substantial changes in the way they do business in a time of very scarce public resources. Third, they must share case-level information that is maintained in different agencies' separate (and sometimes incompatible) management information systems.

a. Achieving and managing collaboration

Participating states need to achieve a high level of collaboration among corrections, parole, community supervision, human services and law enforcement agencies around transition issues and problems. For most, such collaboration is a new, difficult, and challenging exercise. While most agencies cooperate with other agencies, collaboration is very different. In collaboration, agencies exchange information, alter activities, share resources and enhance the capacity of other agencies in order to achieve mutual benefits and common purposes. Collaboration is hard to achieve. The agencies exist within separate bureaucratic boundaries, have separate constituencies, seek to achieve by varying core values, and compete for limited public resources. They are more likely to view themselves as adversaries than allies.

The essential task for TPCI is to create a structure within which these agencies can realize and define common purposes, and discover and articulate the mutual benefits to be gained from sharing information, altering activities, and reallocating resources to reform transition.

NIC required that correctional officials who head prisons, parole release, and postprison supervision take the lead in initiating TPCI. In addition to working together on TPCI reforms, these officials agreed to obtain 1) endorsements from political leaders and 2) commitments from key stakeholders in other human services and criminal justice agencies to participate in project planning. The list of stakeholders varied somewhat from state to state, but included leaders of agencies whose missions were affected by released offenders, or who were in a position to block transition reforms by withholding support or resources. In most states, governors played a key role in launching TPCI by endorsing the reform and by assuring that other executive-branch agencies were actively engaged. Governors in Michigan and Indiana addressed attendees at kickoff meetings and gave ringing endorsements of the forthcoming planning process. In Michigan, the governor's criminal justice policy advisor served as chairperson of their TPCI policy team.

Each state developed a structure within which their TPCI planning proceeded. While these varied somewhat, they had certain features in common. Each state named a site contact—a single individual with whom the NIC project staff and site coordinator worked. The site contact led each state's planning and implementation effort.

Each state established a transition policy team that consisted of the directors of executive branch stakeholder agencies—e.g., the commissioners of corrections, mental health, education, workforce development, welfare, etc. The policy team appointed and empowered subordinate staff within their respective agencies to work on other TPCI workgroups and committees. The policy team met relatively infrequently (e.g., once every three months) to be briefed on progress and problems, and to review and act upon products that steering committees and work groups developed.

Each state established a steering committee, whose members represented all stakeholder agencies. Typically, steering committee members were high-level officials in their respective agencies (such as deputy commissioners and assistant directors). The steering committee served two functions. First, it oversaw and coordinated the efforts of numerous working groups, and second, it produced an overall transition improvement plan. Steering committees typically met once or twice a month.

Most states also established a number of working groups, each of which focused intensively on a narrow range of issues and problems. Typically, a member of the steering committee served on each working group (to ensure communication and avoid redundancy and conflict for groups working on related problems). Working groups consisted of persons from different partnering agencies and typically represented mid- and line-level positions within their respective agencies. Working groups met more frequently—typically once every week or two.

Michigan also created an advisory council, which consisted of over 100 representatives of community-based agencies, service providers, and advocacy groups. Advisory council members can attend any meetings of steering committees or working groups. In addition, TPCI officials appointed selected advisory council members to serve on specific working groups.

These structures divided the work among many smaller groups, and broadened the number of staff in stakeholder agencies who had input into planning the reforms. They also allowed the steering committee to coordinate the efforts of working groups and to resolve conflicts among groups working on related topics.

Each state followed a structured process to initiate their TPCI planning process. Site coordinators conferred with states' contact persons to plan the start up. At the outset each state conducted a system-mapping exercise, in which they compared their existing transition practices with those prescribed by the TPCI model, and noted areas of congruence and dissonance. State staff also collected available data to document the flow of offenders through their system, noting numbers, characteristics, durations, etc. at each major decision point in the TPCI model. This initial system mapping typically was done by and was based on data readily available to corrections staff.

The site contact and site coordinator conferred to identify persons who should be on the policy teams and steering committees. Afterwards, they began planning the state's kickoff meeting.

The kickoff meeting was designed to give participants a common understanding of their existing transition practices and a preliminary understanding of their state's strengths and weaknesses relative to the TPCI model. In addition, the kickoff meeting allowed participants to begin formulating a common vision to guide their transition reforms and to establish preliminary priorities to address in next phases of the effort. The NIC provided an outside expert to facilitate the kickoff meetings.

Kickoff meetings usually lasted two days and attendees usually included the policy team and steering committee members. At the outset, leaders welcomed attendees, and policy team members expressed their initial hopes for and concerns about the initiative. NIC and Abt staff gave presentations on the TPCI model, and implementation efforts in initial states. DOC staff presented the results of the system mapping in order to give everyone a clear sense of the state's strengths and weaknesses relative to the TCPI model.

Kickoff meetings included exercises (usually done in breakout groups that reported back to the

full meeting) designed to reach agreement on initial priorities, and to provide information around which to structure working groups or committees. The kickoff meeting ended with an agreement to conclude work on structuring the state's transition planning process within two or three weeks.

b. Dealing with resource shortfalls

During the 15 months in which NIC, Abt, and advisors designed the TPCI model, state revenues began falling precipitously. There were spirited debates among advisors about whether TPCI could be implemented in the face of plunging appropriations for corrections and human services. Skeptics noted that the TPCI model required that inmates have increased access to interventions that would reduce or mitigate their dynamic risk factors, and that might be impossible to achieve as agency budgets became even more austere.

In the end, most advisors agreed that the best time to institute fundamental changes within agencies is when their resources are tight. If the state's revenues were plentiful and appropriations were generous, agencies would be more likely to layer transition reforms upon "business as usual." And if revenues and appropriations fell in the future, agencies would be more likely to preserve business as usual and jettison the reforms. Indeed, states that applied for TPCI usually noted that due to severe revenue shortfalls, agencies were being directed by policy makers to find new and more efficient ways to operate, and they saw their austere fiscal situations as an opportunity to achieve basic reforms in mission and functions.

In order to increase offenders' access to interventions, TPCI states have to 1) target offenders for interventions, and 2) reallocate resources. TPCI project staff and consultants advise participating states to "triage" their inmate population. Officials might exclude two groups of offenders from enhanced treatment: 1) extremely high-risk offenders or those diagnosed as psychopaths; and 2) low-risk offenders. Indeed, for the highest-risk categories, the appropriate TPCI strategy would be intensive surveillance, with quick, certain, and severe responses to violations related to public safety. This would leave a target group of moderate to higher risk offenders for increased treatment and interventions. This targeting process is consistent with evidence-based practices, which indicate that high-risk psychopaths do not respond to most treatment, and lowrisk offenders are *more likely* to recidivate after intensive treatment.

Officials could analyze offenders in this middle range target population to identify the most prevalent dynamic risk factors that are strongly associated with recidivism within that subset of the inmate population. They could then decide to address the three or four top dynamic risk factors present in individual offenders. By doing a case-level inventory of these top dynamic risk factors, officials could determine the aggregate intervention capacity they would need at any future point in time.

Armed with this information, they could make plans to re-deploy existing resources to achieve that capacity or, if necessary, develop a long-term strategy to secure additional resources to build that capacity.

c. Information Sharing

States also face substantial problems with information sharing. Partnering agencies typically operate different management information sy stems, often created at different times, with different operating systems and different computer languages. In addition, human services, corrections, and law enforcement agencies usually are subject to laws or regulations that make some information confidential. These agencies may have erected substantial internal policies over the years—fueled by conflict with the very agencies with whom TPCI now urges collaboration—that severely limit information sharing.

It is critically important that partnering agencies share information in order to support case management, performancemonitoring, and performance-based management of transition policies and reforms. TPCI expects states to use case management to implement offenders' transition accountability plans. Case management requires multiple agencies to share information about offenders. Likewise, performance-monitoring and performance-based management require

sharing elements of data across agencies about released offenders who are receiving support, services, or supervision in the community. If agencies share that information by transferring paper files, the process will be slow, expensive, and incomplete. If they share that information electronically, it will more likely be timely, inexpensive and more complete.

Fortunately, new tools have been developed recently that make it far easier and cheaper to share information elements that are maintained by different agencies in separate management information systems. TPCI states find that the limits of existing confidentiality laws are generally fairly narrow. If offenders consent to the information sharing, confidentiality strictures can be avoided. In short, the key to information sharing is to generate the political will among leaders of partnering agencies. When agencies recognize the mutual benefits that they will gain from information sharing, it is relatively easy to develop the political will. For example, by enhancing information flow to implement case management for offenders, partnering agencies will have achieved the capacity to improve case management for all clients those agencies serve.

States recognize when they enter the TPCI that they are embarking on a difficult and long-term endeavor. But they also are aware of the potential benefits—improved public safety, more efficient use of limited resources, improved capacity of released offenders to become assets rather than liabilities to their communities and families, and close collaboration with fellow human services, criminal justice and community agencies and organizations. Some of the TPCI states are in midcourse of TPCI implementation; most are just beginning. All will institute performancebased management of their reforms, so information about TPCI's operation effects should begin to emerge in the next year or two.

FIGURE 1
The TPCI Model

Release Authority

Community Supervision

Prison

Human Services Agencies

Sentencing → Admission to Prison → Assessment and Classification → Behavior and Programming → Release Preparation → Release/ Revocation → Supervision and Services → Discharge → Aftercare → Law Abiding Citizen

Violation

Institutional Phase | Re-Entry Phase | Community Phase

Transitional Accountability Plan