

Governor's Weekly Message Transcript: Improving Public Safety by Breaking the Cycle of Recidivism

<http://governor.delaware.gov/podcasts/video/WeeklyMessage161216.mp4>

Hello, I'm Rob Coupe, Commissioner for the Delaware Department of Correction. At the Department of Correction, we're focused on keeping the public safe by providing effective supervision to individuals whose behavior has brought them into contact with our criminal justice system. And we're taking new steps to give these individuals a better chance of turning the page on their past and building new, productive, and law abiding lives.

It's a fact that more than 95% of inmates will be released from incarceration and return to the community. Historically, after release many of these individuals commit new crimes and return to prison. Many factors can influence criminal behavior, and even those who are determined to chart a new course must overcome significant barriers as they reenter the community. A criminal record, lack of job skills, and limited family or community support can make it difficult to make that fresh start. More than half of the offenders under our supervision have been diagnosed with substance use disorders and mental health needs, which can influence criminal behavior. Staying clean and obtaining needed treatment, therefore, is a constant challenge.

We've learned that individuals have a greater chance of success, and a lower likelihood of committing new crimes, when they receive treatment, training and other support while serving their sentences. During Governor Markell's

administration, more than 3,000 incarcerated men and women have received reentry assistance, such as access to social services, housing and healthcare, and job search assistance through our innovative I-ADAPT Reentry Process. This process brings state agencies and community service providers into our prisons to assist inmates who are preparing to transition back into the community. Thousands of individuals have received educational and vocational skills training so that after release they can find employment, care for their families and contribute to the communities they live in. And many more are receiving specialized behavioral health treatment, counseling and addiction treatment while in the custody of the DOC. Together, these efforts are giving individuals a better chance to achieve personal success and break the cycle of recidivism. And that will keep Delaware moving forward.