



Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

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To Interested Parties:

Ohio's correctional system is embarking on a journey of change; change that will reduce violence within our prisons and provide offenders with opportunities to engage in activities that will help them to succeed upon their release from prison. Ohio's three-tier prison system is at the core of this reform and a key component underlying this system is hope. The foundation of the three-tier prison is focusing on individual offenders based on their own needs and behaviors. In addition to developing the three-tier prison system, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction is also undertaking proactive reviews for increased effectiveness and communication in other areas of our operation. I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss one such area – The Ohio Parole Board.

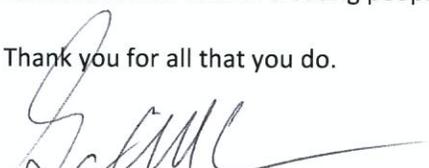
A workgroup consisting of both Parole Board members and institution staff has recently been assigned to look at issues of visibility and communication. One of the tasks of this group is to improve the parole hearing process by increasing transparency through information sharing. This team will develop recommendations to better prepare offenders for meetings with the Parole Board and increase understanding of the decisions made by the Parole Board for everyone involved including staff members, offenders, family members, crime victims and others interested in the process. I look forward to seeing the final recommendations from this group in the upcoming months.

In addition to the workgroup, several other projects are planned or currently underway that will only enhance the important work done by Ohio's Parole Board. The Board will be revising and updating the current Parole Board Handbook and its website to include information on how interested parties can participate in the parole hearing process. These tools will also provide an explanation of the offender population subject to the Board's discretionary release authority and dispel some of the myths surrounding the parole decision making process. In addition, the Board will also seek to increase communication with paroled offenders who can work as mentors and to encourage success for those who are coming out of prison.

I am also excited that the Ohio Parole Board has been selected as one of three sites chosen to participate in a research project currently underway by Carleton University and sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections. DRC sought participation in this project to obtain assistance in improving rationales provided for parole decisions. Through participation in this study, rationales will be improved and more clearly communicated for those involved with the process.

Our agency is always looking for opportunities for improvement and I wanted to share these important initiatives underway within the Ohio Parole Board. I look forward to seeing the results of the measures implemented over the next several months. These enhancements are in alignment with our overall agency reform efforts and guiding principles which are founded on the idea of treating people differently and giving them a sense of hope to improve their lives.

Thank you for all that you do.



Gary C. Mohr,
Director