

Ohio | Department of Rehabilitation & Correction

John R. Kasich, Governor
Gary C. Mohr, Director

July 1, 2015

Dear Colleagues and Stakeholders,

Yesterday, Governor Kasich signed the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 operating budget (Amended Substitute House Bill 64) which represents the most significant level of criminal justice reform that I have witnessed in my 41 years in this business. This budget supports the fundamental philosophy of investing in people and not bricks and mortar that will ultimately lead to a safer Ohio.

During the next biennium, our agency will infuse an additional \$58 million back into Ohio's communities to fund treatment and alternatives to prison. We know treatment in the community is twice as effective and one-third of the cost as comparable treatment in prison, and this funding will provide an increase of approximately 500 community treatment beds where they are needed most throughout the state. Expanding community bed capacity has never been more important as we continue to manage the challenges associated with a growing inmate population.

In an effort to capitalize on the proven effectiveness of community-based treatment, this budget creates a process whereby DRC can identify eligible, low-level, non-violent offenders who have been sentenced to prison and display a moderate to high need for substance abuse treatment, and release those individuals to a community residential facility. We will engage judges and other critical stakeholders to work together to develop the specific details of this process.

Through a partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) supported by this budget, we will see a significant increase in recovery services staff and programming offered to inmates in our prisons. This partnership will improve community linkage to clinical and recovery support upon inmates' release from prison and further reduce Ohio's already low recidivism rate of 27.5 percent. We know 80 percent of Ohio's inmate population has a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse, and our collaboration with OhioMHAS will enhance our ability to offer vital treatment to drug addicted Ohioans, giving them a second chance at success.

The ongoing efficiency and cost effectiveness of this agency will become even more important as we absorb \$11.2 million worth of cuts from the recommended levels in the executive budget proposal in the medical and operations lines. I believe we will be able to manage these cuts, but it is imperative that we continue to work together to do so.

Attached to this letter you will find highlights of the Fiscal year 2016-2017 budget bill. While we must continue to be vigilant with how we utilize resources within our operations, I am excited to see the progress we make over the next two years in meeting our mission of reducing recidivism among those we touch.

Thank you for what you do.



Gary C. Mohr
Director

FY16-17 Budget Bill Synopsis: Amended Substitute HB 64

Language Items of Interest:

- 1) Modifies the Judicial Release provision (R.C. 2929.20), allowing DRC to request Judicial Release of certain offenders serving mandatory sentences based on medical incapacitation.
- 2) Requires DRC to establish and operate a community-based substance use disorder treatment program for qualified inmates: (R.C. 5120.035)
 - a. Allows DRC to establish criteria to be a “qualified inmate”;
 - b. Gives DRC full discretion in determining which inmates to place in the program;
 - c. Permits qualified inmates to be placed in an approved halfway house, reentry center or community residential center outside of a DRC prison;
 - d. Provides that inmates will receive earned credit against his/her prison term for time served in the facility and may earn days of credit,
 - e. Allows DRC to place inmates at an approved residence with electronic monitoring.
- 3) Requires DRC to study the feasibility of converting an existing facility into a substance abuse recovery prison. The study is to be completed and delivered to the leadership in the General Assembly and the Governor by June 30, 2016. (R.C. 5120.037)
- 4) Requires DRC to conduct a one-year pilot program to award grants in support of community-based residential programs, with very specific criteria (faith-based, in existence for at least five years) and requires DRC to partner with an Ohio university to collect program information and report quarterly to leadership in the General Assembly.
 - a. The bill also appropriates \$100,000 each year for this pilot program.
- 5) The Bureau of Recovery Services is transferred to the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services effective July 1, 2015.
- 6) Specifies that a term in a halfway house or an alternative residential facility is not imprisonment. (R.C. 1.05)
- 7) Expands classified employee fallback rights, specifying that an unclassified employee may resume the previously-held classified position (or substantially equal position), even if the employee has held multiple unclassified positions since the move, specifies the circumstances under which an employee can be removed and forfeits the right to resume the classified position (for example - just cause). Adds if an employee is appointed in the unclassified service after 1/1/2016, the employee shall have the right to a position in the classified service only within five years of appointment. (R.C. 5120.38, 5120.381, 5120.382)

Budget Appropriation Items of Interest:

- 1) Our total GRF budget for FY16 is \$1.50 billion and \$1.56 billion for FY17 (not including debt service)
- 2) In the final version of the bill, our operations and healthcare funds are reduced by a combined \$4.3 million in FY16 and a combined \$6.9 million in FY17. All other lines are as requested.