

No Illusion, Offender and Organizational Change in Maryland's Proactive
Community Supervision

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=*ab***Research Summary:**

Evidence-based supervision is the newest in a long line of efforts to advance community corrections. This new model adopts a Risk–Need–Responsivity model

where the agency uses a risk and need tool to identify appropriate treatment and control services and then assigns offenders to such services. Underscoring this new approach is the creation of a social learning environment that makes supervision officers active in facilitating offender change. The goal is to empower the offender. Maryland's Proactive Community Supervision (PCS) model was one of the first to implement this approach. Controlling for length of time on supervision and prior history, logistic regression results found that offenders that were supervised in this new style were less likely to be rearrested (30% for the PCS and 42% of the non-PCS sample; $p < 0.01$) and less likely to have a warrant issues for technical violations (34.7% of the PCS group and 40% for the non-PCS group; $p < 0.10$).

Policy Implications:

The study findings indicate that a behavioral management approach can increase the frequency of contacts and obtain positive offender outcomes. More importantly, the PCS model illustrates that supervision agencies can be transformed to achieve public safety goals through focusing on offender change strategies. Providing officers with new behavioral skills to work with offenders and creating an empowering environment can yield positive outcomes. Criminal justice policy should focus on reengineering community supervision to prevent additional penetration into the justice system, to reduce churning, and to reduce incarceration. @

Questions have originated as to whether community supervision—probation and/or parole—is an effective tool for changing offending and drug-using behaviors and protecting the public (e.g., Austin, 2001; Solomon et al., 2005). After nearly three decades of using law-enforcement techniques to monitor offenders, the field of probation and parole is undergoing a metamorphosis. A renewed form of behavioral management supervision has evolved that intertwines law enforcement and social work models (National Institute of Corrections, 2004; Taxman et al., 2004). The focus of this new model is to work on risk reduction models that identify moderate- and high-risk offenders and their criminogenic needs, and then to provide appropriate services and controls to ameliorate such criminogenic needs. With over 6 million adults under some form of supervision in the United States (Taxman et al., 2007a) and supervision failures accounting for an average of one third of new prison intakes (National Research Council, 2007), supervision agencies are under pressure to adopt approaches that promote successful completion of supervision. The unanswered questions include whether supervision agencies should pursue these new strategies, and, if so, how these strategies can be implemented in organizations that have been practicing “nail ‘em and jail ‘em” (law enforcement) supervision for at least three decades.

A researcher–practitioner collaboration resulted in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Proactive Community Supervision (PCS) model. PCS was designed to adapt the evolving evidence-based practices

literature to community corrections supervision agencies, namely probation and parole. This model involved four main dimensions: (1) Use valid risk and assessment tools to identify criminogenic risks and needs; (2) develop case plans that are responsive to the criminogenic needs of high- and moderate- risk offenders; (3) provide appropriate services and controls, and ensure that the programs and services use social learning or cognitive-behavioral interventions; and (4) provide an environment where the offender can learn prosocial behaviors and successfully complete supervision. The behavioral management strategy positions the probation/parole employee to use the evidence-based tools— risk/needs assessments, case plans, appropriate services, as well as incentives and rewards—in a manner that is fair and consistent and to engage the offender in all phases of the supervision (Taxman, 2002; Taxman, 2006). Results from the evaluation of this model will be presented, including a discussion of the policy implications for a renewed supervision model, and the impact on the scope and tone of criminal justice policy in the United States.

=s1EVOLUTION OF EVIDENCE-BASED COMMUNITY SUPERVISION@

Community supervision has undergone three overlapping developmental phases since the 1970s (Taxman, 2006). Prior to the 1970s, supervision was dominated by social work strategies that emphasize brokerage to other community resources instead of providing direct services. With Martinson's (1974) conclusion that "nothing works" in correctional programming, along with the work of others (Bailey, 1966; Irwin, 1974) and the emergence of the retributive

justice models, community supervision shifted its approach toward enforcement of conditions of release. Law-enforcement strategies crept into practice in the next three decades with a focus on monitoring conditions and enforcing the court or parole board mandates. Supervision is a difficult process for offenders in that it places constraints on their liberties and requires offenders to be held to a standard of conduct; nor surprisingly, approximately 41% of probationers and 55% of parolees are unsuccessful during supervision (Glaze and Bonczar, 2006). The standards of conducts require offenders to be held to standards that easily results in technical failures that have lead to a focus on graduated sanctions and punishments to address compliance-related issues (see Carter, 2001 and Taxman et al., 1999 for a discussion of graduated sanctions). Overall, these various parole/probation strategies had limited effectiveness in reducing recidivism rates.

=s2SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL MODELS@

The dominant theme in the 1970s through early 1990s was that “nothing works” regarding treatment interventions with offenders (Cullen and Gendreau, 2001). Parole/probation officers were encouraged to abandon their traditional social worker role in favor of the enforcer role, which emphasizes rigid enforcement of supervision conditions (Taxman, 2002). To enhance the agents’ abilities to monitor offender behaviors, correctional community agencies experimented with various programs, including drug testing, electronic monitoring, Intensive Supervision Programs (ISP) dominated by more contacts, house arrests, curfews, and boot camps (Petersilia, 1998). These various programs

shared the rationale that the officer's main duty was as an enforcer and that the offender was responsible for independently determining how to fulfill the assigned supervision conditions (Taxman, 2006).

In a randomized field experiment testing ISPs in 14 counties across nine states, Petersilia and Turner (1993a) found that increased surveillance and monitoring of offenders did not coerce positive behavior. ISP participants committed new crimes at the same rate as those in the control group, which was composed of individuals serving a traditional probation program. A difference did occur between the two groups in terms of technical violations, with violations detected among 70% of ISP participants compared with 40% in the control group. Because of the disparate rates of technical violations, 27% of the ISP offenders were returned to prison as compared with only 19% of the control group.

Because of increased surveillance, intermediate sanctions resulted in substantial increases in the number of parole/probation revocations because of technical violations (MacKenzie, 2000; Petersilia, 1998; Taxman, 2002). In a comparison of arrest rates between mandatory parolees, discretionary parolees, and those prisoners released unsupervised, researchers found little differences in the type of parole release in terms of recidivism rates (Solomon et al., 2005). After controlling for criminogenic risk factors, the supervised and unsupervised groups had equivalent arrest rates within 2 years of release, indicating that the agent-offender contact does not seem to be effective in changing offender behavior. Additional research found that increases in the number of agent-offender contacts did not reduce recidivism (Petersilia and Turner, 1993a).

Researchers have also found that reducing agent caseload size from over 100 to around 25–40 also had no effect on recidivism rates (Latessa et al., 1998; Taxman, 2002).

Parole/probation officers are encouraged to fulfill the role of enforcer, and yet, many are resistant to this role. In an evaluation of New Jersey's ISP, Paparozzi and Gendreau (2005) surveyed parole/probation officers regarding whether they adopted a law-enforcement or social work approach. Officers adopting a law-enforcement approach issued technical violations for 42.5% of their caseloads, whereas officers with a social work approach issued technical violations at a rate of 5.4% of offenders.

=s2SUPERVISION WITH TREATMENT: NEW MODELS @

The 1990s brought an emergence of community correction models that sought to integrate treatment into the fabric of supervision. The focus during this second generation was on the seamless inclusion of treatment services into corrections (Taxman, 2006). Examples include drug courts, “break the cycle” initiatives, and prison and/or jail services with links to treatment and aftercare in the community. This generation of community supervision did not represent a theoretical shift from prior models, but it represented a bridge between the treatment and the punitive models of the past. Supervision staff continued to serve as the enforcer but also used the brokerage models to refer offenders to treatment services. Few services were provided directly by the supervision and/or correctional agencies, and the supervision employees continued to monitor

participation. But in these models, the goals were to encourage the offender to participate in treatment programs, as to hold offenders accountable to their supervision requirements.

Given that this generation of community corrections did not represent a substantial departure from past models, it is not surprising that research on treatment programs integrated into traditional supervision practices has yielded negligible and mixed results (Andrews et al., 1990; Anglin et al., 1996, 1999; Austin, 2001; Farabee et al., 1998; Klag et al., 2005; Marlowe et al., 2006; Taxman and Thanner, 2006). Evaluation studies highlighted the successes and concerns with the second generation of community supervision (Byrne and Kelly, 1989; Marlowe, 2003; Paparozzi and Gendreau, 2005; Pearson, 1988; Petersilia and Turner, 1993b; Taxman and Thanner, 2006). In a quasi-experimental evaluation of the ISP in New Jersey, a 10% reduction in recidivism rates was observed among the ISP group compared with a matched comparison group because of the use of peer-supported counseling sessions led by trained parole/probation officers with links to specialized treatment services (Pearson and Harper, 1990). A later study in the same state that employed a mixture of treatment services under an ISP program with coerced treatment found that the coerced treatment-supervision model reduced revocations for new convictions with 19.2% of ISSP participants having a revocation compared with 47.5% of the comparison group (Paparozzi and Gendreau, 2005). Also indicating promising results was the follow-up analysis of Petersilia and Turner's (1993a) field experiment of ISPs. In an analysis of subgroup differences, they found that ISP

offenders receiving a variety of treatment-related services had 10% to 20% lower rates of recidivism compared with the control group (1993b); these results provide some trends that the incorporation of treatment into ISP can produce better results, but the findings are hampered by the small sample sizes and by the use of quasi-experimental methodologies to analyze the data.

Yielding results that are more inconsistent than those discussed above was the evaluation by Byrne and Kelly (1989). In a quasi-experimental evaluation of a Massachusetts ISP, they found no differences in the rates of recidivism between the ISP and comparison groups. Another indication of the limited impact of attaching treatment to traditional supervision models is the evaluation by Latessa et al. (1998). In their field experiment of a “prototypical” ISP, which they characterize as having high doses of treatment and surveillance, they found no significant differences in rates of recidivism.

A common theme from the evaluation studies cited above was that integrating treatment into the supervision sentence can be problematic at best, often yielding mixed results (Taxman and Bouffard, 2002; Thanner and Taxman, 2003). In the Massachusetts evaluation, Byrne and Kelly, 1989 found that only 27% of the offenders received the supervision protocol as intended. In their survey of parole/probation agents, Paparozzi and Gendreau (2005) found officers embracing disparate supervisory styles, with noticeable impacts on their reactions to offenders’ noncompliant behaviors. Efforts to reform supervision have, therefore, met with some anticipated resistance since the integration of treatment into traditional supervision was occurring in an era where the public demand for

accountability and more conditions of supervision was interpreted as support for the law-enforcement role of supervision.

=s2ADOPTION OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES INTO SUPERVISION@

Research indicates that supervision models that rely on quantity of contact between agent and offender do not positively affect recidivism rates (Latessa et al., 1998; Petersilia and Turner, 1993a, 1993b; Taxman, 2002). Substantive empirical work has been done to identify components of a supervision process that are likely to impact offender behaviors: use of a risk/needs tool(s), use of cognitive behavioral and social learning models, emphasis on offender-agent interactions, and agent attention to the nature of the supervision contacts. All of these are eminent from the “what works” literature (Andrews et al., 1990; Cullen and Gendreau, 2001; Taxman, 1999) and can be integrated in community supervision practices. These tenets require attention to process improvement models as well as the environmental milieu of correctional services.

=s3RISK AND NEED ASSESSMENTS@

The Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) approach involves the use of standardized tools to guide the appropriate services and controls required for offenders. Risk involves assessment of the offender’s likelihood of engagement in criminal behavior as determined by static factors such as the age of first arrest, number of prior arrests, number of prior convictions, and so on. Need refers to the dynamic factors that affect engagement in criminal behavior such as an active substance

abuse disorder, negative peer associations, dysfunction families, and criminal value systems (see Andrews and Bonta, 2003 for a discussion of eight factors). In a recent series of studies, Latessa and his colleagues have found strong evidence regarding the importance of using an actuarial risk assessment instrument to reductions in recidivism. In an evaluation of community-based correctional treatment facilities, increased recidivism rates were found for low-risk offenders placed in interventions that were not suitable for their risk level, whereas the same interventions were linked to substantial reductions in recidivism rates for high-risk offenders (Lowenkamp et al., 2005, 2006). Using an extreme example, one facility had a 30% reduction in recidivism for high-risk offenders, whereas low-risk offenders treated at the same facility showed a 29% *increase* in recidivism. Similar types of findings are reported in other studies that illustrate when improper screening and assessment leads to inappropriate placements and nondesirable results (see Bonta et al., 2000; Taxman and Thanner, 2006).

=s3RESPONSIVITY AND LEVEL OF SUPERVISION@

A key component of the RNR model is to use the level of risk to assign the appropriate level of supervision. In the classic sense, Andrews and Bonta (1999) refer to responsivity as gearing the interventions to the offender place in the change process with consideration for offender's needs, learning style, and prior experience with different interventions. As applied to supervision settings, responsivity echoes some of the same premises as the resource allocation model proposed by O'Leary and Clear (1995) in that that high-risk offender should be

accorded more intensive supervision to pursue public safety goals and to address their criminogenic needs. The RNR model uses this premise but focuses on targeting the services and controls based on the dynamic factors and controlling for the internal and environmental factors that are impediments to the offender responding to the interventions. Internal factors include motivation for change and self-esteem, whereas environmental factors include the parole/probation staff, treatment staff, and offender relationships with these agents of change (Ogloff and Davis, 2004; Taxman et al., 2004). The selection of appropriate services and controls (i.e., drug testing, curfews, house arrest, etc.) should be informed by the risk-needs calculus.

=s3TYPE OF INTERVENTIONS AND PROGRAMMING FOR OFFENDERS@

In reviews of experimental programs, researchers have found that cognitive behavioral programs are most effective in changing the behavior of offenders (Cullen and Gendreau, 2000; Landenberg and Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey and Landenberg, 2006; MacKenzie, 2006). An important component that has also been detected is the use of motivational modules to improve treatment readiness and to provide offenders for the change process. Czuchry et al. (2006) found that the offenders who received a two-session motivational intervention were more eager for treatment and, at the end of treatment, were more likely to indicate that they would remain drug-free in the future.. The intervention literature, therefore, notes that coercion to treatment is possible within supervision settings and can impact offender behavior (Farabee et al., 1998; Melnick et al., 2001), but it might

be that treatment programs should be offered in phases that begin with motivational readiness and proceed to more cognitive processing components.

3 OFFENDER-AGENT RELATIONSHIPS

Offenders' attitudes and behavioral outcomes can be influenced by their interactions with supervision officers and treatment providers. Interpersonal communication styles are often dismissed as factors that affect the correctional milieu. Palmer (1995) and Andrews and Kiessling (1980) identified that this nonprogrammatic components, such as agent decorum and interaction style with offenders, are critical to positive offender outcomes. Andrews and Kiessling (1980) determined that after receiving intense training on strategies of interpersonal communication and anticriminal modeling and reinforcement, parole/probation officers were more effective in reducing recidivism than those officers who did not employ these techniques. In a recent review of audio-taped interviews of officers and offenders, researchers found relatively poor adherence to some of the basic principles of Risk, Need, and Responsivity. Officers spent much of the time on enforcement issues such as complying with the conditions of probation; insufficient attention was given to the offender's progress in obtaining services and the offender's attitudes, including antisocial attitudes and peer and social supports for crime. The officers did not use their face-to-face interactions with offenders to impart prosocial modeling, provide differential reinforcement, or attend to criminal thinking (Bonta et al., 2008). Many correctional agencies are moving toward adopting motivational interviewing as a tool to open the

communication lines and to assist officers in developing motivational-enhancing strategies in working with offenders (see Taxman et al., 2004; Walters et al., 2007).

The importance of the relationship on outcomes is reported in a recent study by Skeem et al. (2007). Using instruments to measure the relationship components on three dimensions for probationers with mental health disorders: caring-fairness, trust (indicative of a behavioral management approach), toughness-authoritarianism (law-enforcement approach) and therapeutic alliance, they found that treatment alliance was unrelated to offender outcomes. Behavioral management techniques predicted success and law-enforcement approaches predicted failure where every one point increase in an officer's toughness score increased the odds of revocation by 94%. Skeem and Manchak (2008) comment (references cited therein are from original article):

In surveillance-oriented relationships, officers used control in an indifferent or even belittling manner that often compromised probationers' functioning and engendered reactance to officers' directives. In synthetic relationships, officers used control in the "right way," that is, in a manner perceived as fair, respectful, and motivated by caring. Probationers were allowed to express their opinions, explain themselves, and participate actively in the problem solving process (see Skeem & Petrila, 2004, Cullen, Eck, & Lowenkamp, 2002, Taxman, 2002). This "right way" is an interpersonal form of procedural justice (see MacCoun, 2005), which leaves individuals feeling less coerced, even if they do not agree with the ultimate decision reached by an authority figure (Lidz et al., 1995). @

The importance of the working relationship among officers and offenders are often the unstated “component” of RNR in that RNR assumes a correctional milieu where offender change is supported. But researchers have recognized that organizational attention must be given to addressing this milieu to facilitate the implementation of RNR, and to achieve gains in offender outcomes. These relationships are important to creating an environment where offenders feel they can trust the officer and, to a large extent, have some desire to comply with the conditions of release. Turning decades of enforcement style of supervision toward a working hybrid that can alter offender behavior cannot be ignored in this evolution of probation/parole.

=s1CURRENT STUDY@

The purpose of the evaluation of the Maryland PCS model was to determine whether this evidence-based supervision model had an impact on offender outcomes, particularly on rearrest and violation rates. The PCS model encompasses a new generation of supervision where the role of the probation/parole officer is to facilitate offender change. The study used a contemporaneous design where the control sites were selected to match the PCS sites, and study subjects were individually matched to increase the likelihood of equivalence between PCS and non-PCS samples.

=s2PCS MODEL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE@

The PCS model had five major components, as described in Figure 1. The exhibit illustrates the front end of the process that defines the facilitation of offender change. More detail of the model can be found in Taxman et al. (2004). A five-item risk screener is used to determine initial assignment. (The screener was developed and validated by the research team using administrative files of 20,000 offenders, includes variables of the number of prior arrests, number of arrests within 2 years, alcohol condition, and drug or property offenses). Offenders whose screener indicates any public safety risk are then required to participate in a more thorough assessment process, which occurs over a 30-day window. This involves the use of a standardized tool (e.g., Level of Service Inventory), a thorough assessment of the place of residence, and a review of the offenders' social networks. The officer completes this Risk–Need–Responsivity process to determine the typology of criminogenic behavior. The typology drives the components of the case plan, including the selection of appropriate services and controls. The case plan process assigns responsibilities for both the offender and the supervision employee; they are jointly responsible for the offender's progress. Since the agency does not provide direct services, the supervision employee must work with the community providers to ensure that the offender has access to and participates in treatment. On a monthly basis, the offender and the supervision officer assess progress on the case plan. The case plan is revised monthly based on the offender's progress in obtaining goals and on the offender's attitude. Offenders are given no more than three goals a month, with participation in treatment services prioritized as one of the key goals.

Set Figure 1 Here

On the surface, this model may not seem to be that different than prior case management strategies, but the emphasis on offender engagement to achieve ownership is a major deviation from the typical process. The change in the role of the supervision officer was accomplished through a deliberative process that redefined how the offender and officer interact. In fact, this process was reinforced by organizational goals that reflect values associated with supervision staff using behavioral management strategies.

The change process had four parts: (1) Train the supervision staff to have expertise in the use of communication strategies and applications of the risk–need responsivity model. All of the staff participated in several staff development and booster sessions where the core components of the social learning environment were reinforced. These sessions used cognitive-behavioral strategies that allowed the staff to learn these techniques in terms of working with others. An adaptive version of motivational interviewing became the foundation for the new strategy with the offender taking an active role in the case plan and monitoring. (2) Create a social learning environment. The agency reinforced that officers should use the following tenets in relating to offenders: Greet offenders with proper salutations; shake hands with the offender upon entrance and exit; and maintain eye contact with the offender during all personal conversations. This was combined with the officer using of the basics of motivational interviewing strategies (i.e., ask open-

ended questions, provide affirmations and summary statements for all conversations, roll with resistance, develop discrepancy, and reflect on offender statements; see Taxman et al., 2004) and share information (i.e., the risk–need–responsivity tools) with the offender. The goal was to convert the face-to-face contacts to information exchange sessions where the goals of supervision could be assessed, refined, and restated. Like in other education settings, assessment and other data collection exercises were shared with offenders to allow them to learn about their own behavior. (3) Use performance measures for offenders, supervision staff, and PCS offices. The offender’s case plan was reviewed monthly, based on the case plan accomplishments. The PCS process required front-line supervisors to review the work of supervision employees. The supervisors approved the case plans of the offenders and participated in sanction reviews. The central office also asked each PCS office to report performance measures such as employment of offenders, participation in treatment programs, and other relevant areas in addition to typical performance indicators (arrest, positive urine results, and warrants for technical violations). (4) The agency evolved into an organizational learning environment for the staff (like the social learning model for offenders). The process of achieving an organizational learning environment started by providing all supervisors with training on supervising skills, which included using the 360 feedback model, wherein the supervisors were required to learn about themselves through the eyes of their employees and others who work with them. Supervisors also learned about research findings in corrections and how to apply them to their organization, as

well as how to provide a business process for each office that was supportive of PCS and also suitable to their own sociolegal culture. Additionally, the agency used book clubs as well as the reading of journal articles and other literature to encourage the staff to broaden their perspective and to take the challenge of being a change agent seriously.

=s1METHODS@

The study used a random selection-individual match design, which is a quasi-experimental design closely approximating random assignment. The individual match design allowed us to select offenders for a comparison group with the same characteristics as offenders in the PCS sites.

=s2SAMPLE SELECTION: PCS OFFENDERS@

The population from which the PCS sample was selected was composed of offenders supervised at the four sites strategically chosen to implement PCS because of their distinct regional characteristics. One site is located within Baltimore City, an urban area with a large proportion of parolees and offenders of color. Two other sites are located in mixed residential–urban areas and serve a multiracial population of offenders. The fourth site is located in a rural area on Maryland’s Eastern Shore and is characterized by predominately white offenders. To be eligible for our study, offenders at the PCS sites needed to fulfill the following four selection criteria: (1) started supervision during the calendar year 2004; (2) served a minimum of 6 months on supervision (to ensure exposure to

the core of the PCS process); (3) been rated moderate to high risk for recidivism using a validated screener; and (4) been sentenced to a parole, probation, or mandatory release type of community supervision. Application of the selection criteria reduced the number of eligible candidates to 2,852, which constituted our sampling frame. We used a random number generator to select a sample of 335 individuals. To ensure that the sample accurately reflected the distribution of offenders in the population, we stratified the sample selection by PCS site. All of these 335 individuals were screened a “high” risk and required a formal assessment using the LSI-R to determine actual level of risk. Also 61 were transferred to another office leaving the sample to 274.

=s2COMPARISON GROUP FOR THE PCS SAMPLE@

In accord with the geographic and demographic characteristics of the four PCS sites, we chose four other locations that were comparable with the PCS sites of an urban area, two suburban, and one rural. The electronic file indicated a population of 18,679 offenders in the state of Maryland serving a community-based supervision sentence in 2004 at one of the four comparison sites. The sampling frame for the comparison group was derived in the same manner as the PCS sample. In each of the four jurisdictions, we matched offenders to the similar jurisdiction based on gender, race, age, type of supervision, and category of instant offense. Regarding age, individuals were divided into two groups, over and under 30 years of age. Current convictions were grouped into the following major categories: violent, property, drug distribution,

drug possession, domestic violence, driving under the influence (DUI), technical violations, and a category termed “other” (e.g., public nuisance offenses such as vandalism, prostitution, disorderly conduct, disabled motor vehicle, hit and run, littering/trash dump, reckless driving, loitering, and so on).

The final sample was 274 PCS and 274 non-PCS cases. Table 1 presents the distribution of the final sample by offender characteristics.

****Insert Table 1 Here****

=s2EQUIVALENCE OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS (PCS AND NON-PCS)@

We collected arrest records for offenders at the PCS and non-PCS sites in 2000, 4 years before the implementation of the intervention. The purpose was to examine historical arrest rates to determine the equivalency of police actions in the selected sites. We followed the same methodology as with the original study samples in isolating our sampling frame. Like the 2004 group, the 2000 PCS sample was selected randomly. The historical control group consisted of high risk in PCS sites ($n = 413$) and non-PCS ($n = 401$). For low-risk offenders, we gathered information on 414 offenders in PCS sites and 514 in non-PCS sites. We also collected data on the 2004 sample that consist of PCS low-risk cases ($n = 396$) and non-PCS ($n = 1,125$).

The historical samples from the PCS and non-PCS sites indicate that in 2000, before implementation of PCS, high-risk offenders at the PCS sites were arrested at the same rate as high-risk offenders in non-PCS sites. During the

observation period, 35.4% of the PCS and 37.2% of the non-PCS offenders were arrested. The logistic regression reported in Table 2 indicates that after controlling for criminogenic factors, the difference in arrest rates was not statistically different.

The rearrest rates for the historical low-risk samples provide additional support for the equivalence of PCS and non-PCS sites. During the observation period, 21.7% of the low-risk PCS and 19.1% of the low-risk non-PCS offenders were arrested. After controlling for length of time on supervision and arrest history, a logistic regression model indicated that no statistical difference was found in rearrest rates in the sites 4 years before the implementation of the new model.

Insert Table 2 Here

=s2KEY VARIABLES@

We collected data on the level of implementation of the core components of the PCS strategy to understand the degree to which PCS was implemented. The five measured components included (1) completion of LSI-R, (2) identification of offender's typology, (3) identification of offender's triggers for criminal behavior, (4) development of a case plan, and (5) implementation of the case plan.

=s3BEHAVIOR ON SUPERVISION@

We used three measures to examine the behavior of offenders and officers during the supervision period: status of assigned responsibilities, supervision contacts, and level of offender compliant behavior. We operationalized assigned responsibilities as a dichotomous variable, with a “1” indicating that a given assigned responsibility was at least partially completed. An assigned responsibility constitutes any behavior mandated by the court or the agent. Court-ordered responsibilities are typically detailed in the documents formally assigning a community supervision sentence. Responsibilities assigned by supervision officers are outlined in the case plan.

Supervision contacts refers to the number of face-to-face and telephone contacts between the agent and the offender as well as agent collateral contacts with the offender’s close family and associates. The level of offender compliant behavior refers to the number of noncompliant behaviors by the offender that are considered to be in violation of the conditions of supervision. For example, noncompliance with the assigned responsibilities, new arrests, technical violations of probation, positive urinalysis, or any other known misbehavior, no matter how minor, are included.

=s3OUTCOME MEASURES@

We evaluated the impact of PCS on three outcomes: recidivism, technical violations, and when applicable, drug use. Recidivism was a binary variable, with a “1” representing any indication of a new arrest during the observation period. Arrest data were gathered from a central repository for criminal arrests.

Technical violations were also a dichotomous variable, with a “1” indicating that the agent requested a warrant for a parole/probation revocation because of violations of orders of release during the observation period. We used a request by the supervision officer for a warrant for a technical violation since this is maintained in the database of the agency; the court decision on revocation generally takes up to 6 months after the request, which made it difficult to include in this study because of the timing of data collection.

The final outcome, drug use, was a dichotomous variable, with a “1” indicating that the offender tested positive during a scheduled urinalysis.¹ This outcome was analyzed for those offenders that were on a drug testing schedule by the court/parole board.

=s3CONTROL VARIABLES@

Length of time on supervision and criminal history served as our only control variables. Criminal history was represented by the number of arrests before the supervision start date. We collected these data from the criminal history database.

=s1FINDINGS@

=s2IMPLEMENTATION OF PCS@

¹ We excluded the first positive drug test because it frequently represents behaviors before the supervision period.

In the PCS strategy, the first core step is the completion of an LSI-R assessment. The supervision plan and progress monitoring cannot occur without substantive information from the LSI-R or another intensive assessment tool; otherwise, the probation/parole agent is using a “generic” model of supervision instead of focusing the supervision on addressing the criminogenic traits of the individual offender. In this cohort, 70% of the offenders were assessed with an LSI-R; the remaining 30% were not. The average LSI-R score was 15.6, with a standard deviation of 7.9. This average score corresponds to a rating of medium risk in the community, according to the national standards for the LSI-R (Andrews and Bonta, 2003). About 30% of the offenders scored under 11; 29% scored 11–17, which indicates medium-risk; 28% scored 18–25, which is moderate to high risk; and 13% scored 26 or more, which reflects high risk.²

Overall, typologies were assigned in 56% of the PCS cases, including 79% of the cases in which an LSI-R was completed. The cases with typologies assigned were distributed as follows: 46% disassociated, 24% drug-involved, 20% violent, and 10% were classified as sex offenders, mental health, or domestic violence. This measure focuses on the degree of implementation of the case planning components because typologies cannot be assigned without going through the RNR process.

=s2BEHAVIORS ON SUPERVISION@

² A preliminary review of the findings by LSI-R found that those offenders with higher scores had an increased rate of arrest as compared with those that had lower scores on the LSI-R.

Once an offender's typology and triggers have been identified, officers are responsible for working with the offender to create a case plan that assigns specific responsibilities to the agent and the offender. If a typology has been assigned, the agent can choose from a set of responsibilities tailored to that typology as well as specify additional responsibilities. If a typology has not been assigned, the responsibilities are generally based on court orders.

Table 3 presents a comparison of the implementation of the PCS strategy across the four areas in terms of the responsibilities assigned and completed. Again, the unidentified group was considered to approximate traditional supervision. Table 3 shows that offenders assigned a typology have more responsibilities than those without and tend to have a greater number of actions taken on the case plan. Furthermore, offenders with typologies have more requirements that are geared to their criminogenic traits, and additional offender responsibilities generally include contacts with the agent. PCS offenders with assigned typologies had between 90% (disassociated) and 150% (drug) more responsibilities in their case plans that reflect goals to achieve to address criminogenic traits than those under traditional supervision.

Insert Table 3 Here

Table 4 examines whether being assigned a typology affected the offenders' average contacts per month with the agent. The mean number of contacts per month is higher for offenders with a typology as compared with

offenders without ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, for offenders with drug testing conditions, tests are performed more frequently on the offenders assigned a typology than on offenders without a typology ($p < 0.05$). Finally, offenders assigned a typology had more frequent contact with their agent than those for whom the typology was unidentified.

Insert Table 4 Here

PCS offenders assigned a typology had a greater number of responsibilities to achieve in order to be successful on supervision compared with offenders without a typology. Other studies suggest that increasing the number of conditions placed on offenders results in more infractions and more violations of probation/parole for failure to abide by the conditions (Petersilia, 1997; Petersilia and Turner, 1993a, 1993b). This study suggests that increased conditions do not necessarily result in increased noncompliance, and that conditions that are targeted to the offender's risk and needs may result in the offender grasping the behaviors that are unacceptable during supervision.

No significant difference is found across typologies in the mean number of incidents of noncompliant behavior ($p < 0.05$) as shown in Table 5, despite the fact that those offenders assigned a typology had a far greater number of conditions. Proportionately, those offenders assigned a typology are actually attending to the components of the case plan at a greater rate. Not surprisingly, drug-involved offenders tended to have more incidents of noncompliance,

including attendance at treatment, and violent offenders had fewer. The difference between the traditional group (mean of 18.8 incidents per case) and the combined group of offenders who were assigned typologies (combined mean of 17.5 incidents per case) was not statistically significant. With the increased number of responsibilities, one would have expected those with an assigned typology to have more noncompliant incidences.

As shown in Table 5, with respect to agents' responses to noncompliant behavior, the differences across typologies and between the unidentified group and the group of offenders with typologies assigned were not statistically significant. Although officers may provide more scrutiny over offenders for whom they have designated a typology, they are not more likely to sanction these offenders for noncompliant behavior.

Insert Table 5 Here

=s2IMPACT OF THE PCS STRATEGY@

A simple logistic regression model was developed to assess the impact of PCS on three outcomes: rearrests, technical violations, and drug test positive rates. The model includes one explanatory variable, participation in PCS, and two control variables, length of time on supervision and criminal history. We used the first control variable to extenuate the "exposure" period as a possible explanation for any differential effects. Criminal history was used to mitigate potential selection bias in the samples.

=s2REARRESTS@

The offenders were monitored for rearrest after their placement on supervision. The results of the analysis of the 2004 PCS and non-PCS groups are listed in Table 6 and indicate that participation in PCS reduced the likelihood of arrest by 42%. During the observation period, 30% of the PCS sample was arrested compared with 42% of the non-PCS sample even though the PCS cases had a slightly higher criminal history rate (mean of 7.3) compared with the non-PCS (mean of 6.8). This difference remained significant in the logistic regression model. Although criminal history was statistically significant, their beta coefficients were small, which indicated a weak association with criminal behavior.

***Insert Table 6 Here ***

=s2TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS@

The results of the analysis of technical violations during a year of supervision are presented in Table 7. During the year, 34.7% of the PCS group committed a technical violation as compared with 40.1% of the non-PCS group, although this difference is not statistically significant. The expectation would have been higher technical violation rates for the PCS group because they had more contact with the offender. As shown in Table 7, this result is not the case. Involved in PCS seems to reduce the odds of technical violations by 20%,

although this difference is statistically significant at the 0.10 level, which indicates a trend toward reduced violations.

Insert Table 7 Here

On average, PCS officers worked with offenders for an average of 268 days as compared with the non-PCS officers who worked for 210 days (t -statistic: -2.69 , $p \leq 0.05$). The case planning process yielded a greater time frame for officers to commit to work with offenders on criminogenic needs.

=s2POSITIVE DRUG TESTS@

Among offenders with court-mandated drug testing as a condition of supervision,³ we found no significant differences in the likelihood of a positive drug test between PCS and non-PCS. As Table 8 suggests, participation in PCS did not seem to have an impact on drug test positive rates, probably because of the paucity of treatment services available to offenders in this site. In fact, our study found that less than 40% of the offenders participated in drug treatment services because of the long waiting lists in many jurisdictions. The number of days on supervision affected the drug test positive rate, although the strength of the relationship was weak.

Table 8 Here

³ Among the PCS sample, 134 offenders were required to be drug tested, whereas 172 among the non-PCS sample were mandated to drug testing. Not all offenders participated in drug treatment because of the paucity of treatment programs available in the jurisdiction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A new generation of community supervision focuses on improving the interaction between the offender and the supervision staff through a series of targeted activities that are routine functions: risk and need assessment, case management, responsivity, and monitoring of the case plan. This model is a variation of intensive supervision but differs with an emphasis on behavioral management strategies (not enforcement but a synthesis of the two) and involving the offender in the process of determining goals and pathways to achieve these goals. Unlike case management, which is generally premised on an authoritarian model that dictates what the offender should do, the behavioral management model arms the supervision staff with tools of motivational enhancement, social learning environments, and targeted emphasis on core criminogenic needs. Together, this approach represents an evolution of the model away from “accountability” to shared decision-making models where the offender weighs the methods to ameliorate negative outcomes. This model meets the tenets of therapeutic jurisprudence where the emphasis is on providing a supervision milieu that is supportive of offender change.

This article provided an overview of the change process that accompanied this new model of supervision, and the reader is directed to other articles on this topic (Sachwald and Eley, 2003; Sachwald et al., 2006; Taxman et al., 2004). This change model focused on improving the skills of the line supervision staff to

create an environment where the focus was on offender achievements in targeted areas. Resources were devoted to providing officers with motivational interviewing, case planning, and problem solving skills—none are traditionally provided as part of the training provided by the agency. The end result was that line staff perceived their job to be facilitators of offender change, and to work with the offender to improve supervision outcomes. These skills provided the line staff with techniques to work with offenders that ultimately resulted in staff working with more difficult cases for longer periods of time (268 days as compared with 210 for the average non-PCS case) to assist the offender in efforts to address criminogenic risk/need factors. This finding illustrates that staff developed and used tools to work with offenders who were a bit slower in the change process, and who needed more guidance to begin the recovery process. The indicators—reduced rearrest and technical violation rates—signify that it is possible to work differently with this population to make strides in positive supervision outcomes.

The jurisdiction where this work occurred is one where the probation system relies on a brokerage model of supervision. Given that national estimates are that over two thirds of probation and/or parole agencies rely on external agencies to provide services (see Taxman and Perdoni, 2008) and often without compensating them for the services, the role of the probation officer in this type of model has been the subject of much discussion. Initiatives dating back to the 1970s (i.e., Treatment Accountability for Safer Communities) have fostered the concept that the probation officer should emphasize the monitoring role, but

more recent efforts have tweaked this to involve the probation officer in other roles. The model that was used by this jurisdiction was to develop a formal network of providers that were willing to work with the offender population, and to revise their current treatment services to include the multiple needs of the population. Over 100 partnerships were developed to provide services to probationers. The PCS process essentially established a triage system where treatment-based interventions were reserved for the moderate and high-risk offenders with criminogenic needs that could be addressed using clinical or pharmacological programming (Lowenkamp et al., 2006; Taxman, 2006). Few drug treatment programs are available for the offender population, and many do not use the recommended cognitive behavioral therapy. Even fewer communities have services for disassociated offenders or those with anti-social behaviors.

Although the overall “what works” or evidence-based literature has been premised on therapeutic models such as cognitive behavioral therapy, the application of this to the probation and parole field illustrates how some concepts are applicable, and the small but significant gains that can be made by clarifying how the officer plays a supportive role in the change process. The Proactive Community Supervision model turns the tide on the caseload size literature. Prior literature in this area has found that the size of the caseload does not affect outcomes [for a discussion, see Taxman (2002)], but these studies did little to advance the skill sets of officers except to free up time. However, when equipped with new tools to work with offenders and a mandate to address targeted criminogenic needs, the caseload size of officers is crucial. Prior experiments in

caseload size did not address the “work products” of the officers but assumed that the officers would know what to do when they had the available time. The Proactive Community Supervision project did not make this assumption—rather, it assumed that the staff needed new evidence-based tools and practices to work with offenders. By providing these tools (e.g., motivational interviewing and problem solving), staff had new techniques to work with offenders. The agency used an organizational learning model to reinforce the change process where staff were introduced the new skills, they were given opportunities to test out the new skills, and they were asked to integrate into their normal practice. As expected, implementation was less than perfect with only 70% of the target population subjected to the new process. And few new treatment services were provided in the community, which limited the ability to implement the evidence-based treatment model. The PCS model had reduced caseload sizes with the offender-to-officer ratio 1:55 by creating administrative caseloads for low-risk offenders; and the officers were able to work differently (and successfully) with moderate and high-risk offenders.

=s2STUDY LIMITATIONS@

This study was designed as a process and outcome evaluation of the Proactive Community Supervision model (on a limited budget) using case file and administrative data. Interviews were not conducted with offenders or line staff, although these would have provided a greater understanding of how staff adapted to change and of whether offenders noticed differences in their

supervision officers. (Note: Informal observations with select offenders confirming that probationers have a “chance” to be successful.) This analysis also presented the findings for a random selection of offenders supervised under this model, and because of fiscal constraints, the sample size was small. This small sample precludes us from analyzing differential outcomes of offenders. The same is true for treatment-related services—few offenders participated in treatment because of the dearth of services, and therefore, we were unable to detect differences for those offenders that participated in treatment.

CONCLUSIONS

The backbone of the corrections systems is probation supervision. Nearly six million adults are on supervision (Taxman et al., 2007b). The Proactive Community Supervision model provides a new generation of supervision practices that could shift the direction of outcomes from probation supervision. Improving the success of community supervision can also work toward improving the intakes to prison, because nearly a third or more of intakes to prison are from failures in community supervision. More research is needed to understand better the organizational change process that accompanied this transformation in practice, but this study demonstrates that community supervision can be more than the “front door” to prison—if delivered appropriately, community supervision may serve to reduce the revolving door. The lessons from the experience in the four pioneer sites in Maryland and other jurisdictions experimenting with new models in supervision is that there is much

to learn, and it is a worthwhile pursuit to encourage supervision that focuses on engaging offenders in behavior change models. The value of this approach is that it demonstrates that it is possible to obtain better outcomes for offenders by developing a correctional milieu where offender change is supported. Of course, a national strategy on strengthening community supervision through addressing the organizational culture to adopt behavioral management strategies would demonstrate that supervision does not need to be the front door to prison. Until such a national strategy is adopted, however, it is unlikely that we will see changes in incarceration or sentencing policies; the public must value community supervision as a commodity that can reduce the risk of recidivism for the majority of sentenced offenders.

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TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF FINAL PCS AND NON-PCS SAMPLES BY
OFFENDER CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	PCS	Non-PCS
% male	83.0	83.0
% African American	85.0	85.0
% on probation	88.0	87.6
Age—% over 30	53.3	54.0
Age—mean	33.9	33.8
Current offense type—% violent	31.0	29.2
Current offense type—% personal/property	17.5	18.9
Current offense type—% drug	41.6	42.8
Current offense type—% other	9.9	9.1

TABLE 2: LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF HISTORICAL CONTROL GROUP
 TO ILLUSTRATE EQUIVALENCE OF PCS AND NON-PCS SITE ON
 LIKELIHOOD OF NEW ARREST, CONTROLLING FOR THE LENGTH OF
 TIME ON SUPERVISION AND ARREST HISTORY

	β	S.E.	O/R
PCS site location	-0.111	0.153	0.896
Number of days on supervision	0.004*	0.001	1.004
Number of prior arrests	0.069*	0.014	1.072
Constant	-2.320*	0.337	

ABBREVIATIONS: O/R = odds ratio; S.E. = standard error.

* $p < 0.01$.

TABLE 3. DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF
RESPONSIBILITIES IN CASE PLANS

	Typology				
	Disassociated (<i>n</i> = 71)	Drug Involved (<i>n</i> = 36)	DV/MH/ Sex ^a (<i>n</i> = 16)	Violent (<i>n</i> = 30)	Typology Unidentified (<i>n</i> = 121)
Mean # of agent responsibilities in case plan	3.4	6.4	4.3	2.9	0.5
Mean # of offender responsibilities in case plan	3.8	5.0	4.2	4.0	2.0
Mean # of responsibilities agent took action	2.3	4.2	3.1	2.5	0.3
Mean # of responsibilities action by offender was taken	1.7	2.2	2.7	2.0	0.9

^aCombines domestic violence (DV), mental health (MH), and sex offender (Sex) typologies.

TABLE 4. SUPERVISION CONTACTS AND DRUG TESTS

	Had a Typology	
	Yes	No
Mean number of contacts per month	1.7	1.3
Mean number of drug tests per month for offenders with court-ordered conditions	2.0	1.3
Mean days between contacts	24	48

TABLE 5. NONCOMPLIANT BEHAVIORS AND SANCTIONS

	Typology				Typology Unidentified (n = 121)
	Disassociated (n = 71)	Drug Involved (n = 36)	DV/MH/ Sex^a (n = 16)	Violent (n = 30)	
% no noncompliant behaviors	17	6	13	17	9
Mean number of noncompliant incidents	19.2	26.1	11.3	6.3	18.8
% noncompliant incidents sanctioned	33	27	44	26	39

^aCombines domestic violence (DV), mental health (MH), and sex offender (Sex) typologies.

TABLE 6. LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF THE EFFECT OF PCS ON
THE LIKELIHOOD OF A NEW ARREST

	β	S.E.	O/R
PCS supervision	-0.553**	0.182	0.58
Number of days on supervision	0.001	0.001	1.001
Number of prior arrests	0.050**	0.015	1.052
Constant	-0.785	0.402	

ABBREVIATIONS: O/R = odds ratio; S.E. = standard error.

** $p \leq 0.01$.

TABLE 7. LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF THE EFFECT OF PCS ON
THE LIKELIHOOD OF A TECHNICAL VIOLATION

	B	S.E.	O/R
PCS supervision	-0.222*	0.180	0.801
Number of days on supervision	0.000	0.001	1.000
Number of prior arrests	0.001	0.014	1.001
Constant	-0.279	0.398	

ABBREVIATIONS: O/R = odds ratio; S.E. = standard error.

* $p < 0.10$.

TABLE 8. LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF THE EFFECT OF PCS ON THE
 LIKELIHOOD OF A POSITIVE DRUG TEST

	B	S.E.	O/R
PCS supervision	0.115	0.241	1.122
Number of days on supervision	0.004**	0.001	1.004
Number of prior arrests	-0.009	0.017	0.991
Constant	-1.742**	0.489	

ABBREVIATIONS: O/R = odds ratio; S.E. = standard error.

** $p < 0.01$.

FIGURE 1. OVERVIEW OF PROCESS TO ENGAGE OFFENDERS IN CASE PLANNING PROCESS

