



Preliminary Tracking of MPRI Outcomes

April 29, 2008

Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative

The MPRI in Context:

Tracking the outcomes of what?

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- Crime reduction strategy via:
 - Increased offender success rates upon release
 - Reduced threat of harm by released offenders
- As a consequence, also intended to yield:
 - Reduced prison population
 - Controlled costs & reinvestment of savings

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- Also born, at least in part, out of necessity
 - 19 consecutive years of population growth through 2002
 - More annual growth projected with few remaining beds
- Began implementation with Phases II & III
 - Transition accountability plans & release preparation
 - Institutional parole agents & community in-reach
 - Supervision & services – addressing gaps and barriers

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- Parole Board selects cases for parole via MPRI
 - Moderate to high risk cases - parole denied if refuse
 - Selected cases transferred to pilot site facility near home community for in-reach and release planning
- Systematic month-by-month tracking of 11 individual release cohorts so far
 - More of the full MPRI Model gradually in place over time
 - Escalating benefits to each cohort expected to yield progressively improving recidivism outcomes

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- Intensive ReEntry Units (IRU): Statewide, 2005-2007
 - Converted Parole Violator Diversion Program (PVDP)
 - “Precursors” to the MPRI – testing ground for reentry practices
 - Became designated as “MPRI Statewide” in mid-2007
- 1st Official 8 MPRI Pilot Sites (releases began late 2005)
 - Mostly large urban centers, some rural multi-county coverage
- 2nd Official 7 MPRI Pilot Sites (releases began late 2006)
 - Remaining large urban centers

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- MPRI Community Placement Program (2007)
 - Specialized short-term demonstration project
 - Restricted to cases past ERD and nonviolent/non-weapons
 - Transitional residential housing, services (with drug testing)
- MPRI Statewide (All Fiscal Year 2008 MPRI cases)
 - All 83 Michigan counties now covered by the MPRI
- MPRI Mentally Ill Demonstration Project (began 2006)
 - Specialized subpopulation – failure rate similar, but fail faster

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- Tracking of initial cohorts not definitive
 - Full MPRI model yet to be implemented (esp. Phase I)
 - Initiative not yet up-to-scale and must mature
 - Fidelity to the model to be determined
 - Expanded, integrated data systems still under development to fully capture both MPRI implementation measures and intermediate outcome measures
 - Quality assurance and continuous quality improvement under development

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Why now if not definitive results?

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- The Michigan Legislature has set statutory conditions on the expenditure of MPRI funds from the start (through appropriations law boilerplate reporting requirements):
 - Monthly reporting on the status and recidivism levels of all MPRI participants who have been released (has since been reduced to a quarterly requirement)
 - Annual reports on a comparison of the overall recidivism rates and length of time prior to return to prison of all MPRI participants with those of all released offenders who did not participate in the MPRI
 - Miscellaneous other reports, including an annual recidivism reduction plan and performance standards

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- Initial tracking methodology intent:
 - To establish whether results to date are consistent with expectations of improvement, rather than either no change or negative results
 - Some have hypothesized that the added offender visibility, community attention, and intensity of supervision under the MPRI would yield worse outcomes because of greater detection of negative behavior (instead of a focus on offender success)
 - Given the release of moderate to high risk offenders under the MPRI who would otherwise be denied parole, it is important to monitor whether preliminary outcomes are at least headed in the right direction (even if too early to assess attribution and causality)

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Methodology to Date?

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- Measurement of Recidivism: **Return to Prison** as a :
 - Parole violator technical return
 - Parole violator new sentence
 - New prison commitment after parole discharge or max out
- This measure has the largest impact on the Department of Corrections in terms of bedspace and costs, and is a reflection of negative offender behavior that rises to the level of necessitating re-incarceration in State prison
- Over the next several years, it is the intent of the Department to expand its view by moving toward a more robust evaluation process that includes arrests and convictions as reflecting the full extent of re-victimization by released offenders (will require more access to data).

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- Baseline Release Year Cohort for Comparisons: **1998**
 - The most recent year that would provide a full four years of potential follow-up for an entire annual release cohort before the follow-up period would reach into 2003
 - 2003 was the year when the “low hanging fruit” of the genesis of the MPRI model was identified and implemented, yielding immediate major improvements in returns to prison in that year

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- Initial Length of Follow-Up Period: **2 Years**
 - To get some early sense of the preliminary results without waiting for MPRI cases to have been in the community for 3-4 years
 - Baseline data show that a substantial majority of the returns to prison occur within 2 years of release
 - Only 6% of the MPRI-related releases so far have been in the community long enough for a full 2-year follow-up period
 - Thus, the need to control for time at risk so far for each case and a major reason that the results to date are considered to be both very preliminary and not statistically significant

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- Controlling for Other Major Variables Related to Release Outcomes: **Key Factors**
 - **History of prior parole failure** – 24% more likely to fail again
 - **Mental illness** – similar failure rates, faster time to fail
 - **Discharge on the maximum sentence** – risk of return to prison only for new crime
 - **County of release** – significant differences in baseline outcomes from one county to another, but too few cases for analysis so far when broken down this finely and analysis of county baseline differences would be necessary as well.

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Preliminary Tracking of MPRI Outcomes:

Initial Results to Date?

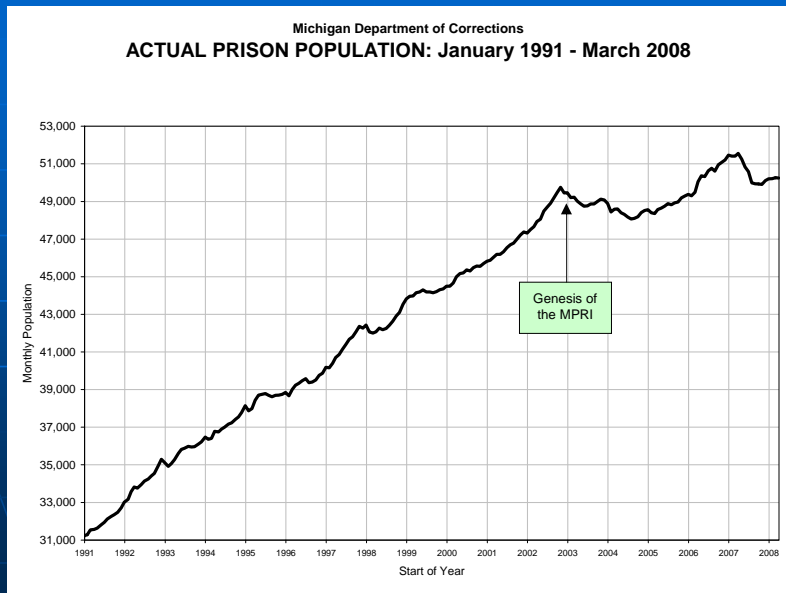
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- 11,925 identified for or engaged in the MPRI through November 2007 (in either IRU or MPRI release cohorts)
- 9,388 (78%) released to parole or discharged on the maximum sentence through November 2007
- MPRI is targeting offenders who are otherwise likely to fail:
 - Offenders who have a prior history of parole failure are 24% more likely to fail again.
 - 65% of MPRI cases released had a history of prior parole failure, compared to 35% of paroles in the 1998 baseline year
- MPRI outcomes through November 2007 show a 26% improvement in total returns to prison
- 493 fewer returned to prison than expected under baseline

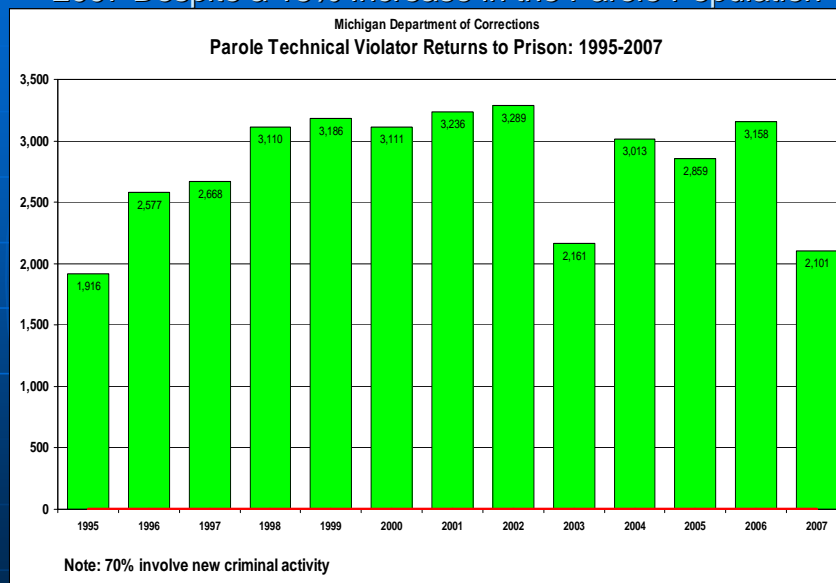
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Significant Shift in Long-Term Population Trend



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Parole Violator Technical Returns Decreased by 33% in 2007 Despite a 15% Increase in the Parole Population



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- We believe the preponderance of the evidence supports 3 propositions:
 1. Real changes in policies and procedures are occurring as the result of MPRI within and outside the Michigan Department of Corrections, including at the local level, consistent with the best evidence regarding effective practices
 2. Real changes in outcomes are also occurring
 3. There is reason to believe that the changes in outcomes are, at least in substantial part, the result of the changes in practices brought about by the MPRI.

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Weaknesses and Limitations?

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- Initial tracking effort is an ex-post-facto design with numerous potential confounders for which sufficient controls have not yet been imposed
- As the current measure of recidivism, return to prison reflects behaviors that rise to the level of re-incarceration in State prison, but broader measures such as arrests leading to verifiable convictions would be preferable to capture the full extent of re-victimization
- Time at risk is currently neither sufficiently long nor standardized enough to draw anything other than preliminary conclusions
- More data collection & process evaluation will be necessary to assess the nature, extent and fidelity of implementation of the MPRI model

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- There is a great deal of variability across the MPRI sites with regard to all manner of local differences, such as:
 - Economic/employment and housing prospects within depressed areas
 - Evolution and status of community corrections
 - Baseline recidivism outcomes influenced by local charging and plea bargaining practices
 - Gaps and barriers to capacity and delivery of relevant services
- We cannot yet establish empirical links between observed outcomes and MPRI processes, activities and spending – including a lack of reliably complete data so far with regard to intermediate outcomes

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Next Steps?

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- How to demonstrate full MPRI Model implementation with fidelity?
- How to continue to improve the monitoring of progress?
- Given how complex an enterprise the MPRI has become, how to best measure and record the multiple dimensions of:
 - Process?
 - Outcomes?
 - Impact?

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- How to fully account for the profound systemic changes that are represented by implementation of the MPRI Model?
 - Not just a linear set of limited steps in the handling of each offender from reception through discharge and aftercare
 - Instead, a sweeping change from a philosophy of, "Trail them, nail them and jail them," to a focus on offender success as law abiding citizens with the tools necessary to succeed
 - A massive culture change in not only the Department of Corrections, but also in the other partnering State Departments, in stakeholder agencies and organizations, and in every local community with offenders returning home
 - Especially as the MPRI is brought up-to-scale to the point where it is no longer an initiative at all, but instead simply how the Department of Corrections does business every day with every offender under its jurisdiction