

**MEMO**



DEC 03 2010

**Senate of Pennsylvania**

December 1, 2010

**TO:** ALL SENATORS

**FROM:** Stewart J. Greenleaf

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stewart J. Greenleaf".

**SUBJECT:** Cosponsorship -- **Criminal Justice and Mental Health Reinvestment Act**

I am reintroducing **Senate Bill 74**, establishing a grant program to assist counties in diverting from the criminal justice system individuals with mental health problems. The grant program will be administered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). The legislation provides for planning grants and implementation grants.

The planning grants will be used to develop effective collaboration efforts among participants in affected government agencies, including the criminal and civil justice systems, mental health and substance abuse treatment service providers, transportation programs, and housing assistance programs. The collaborative efforts will be the basis for developing a problem-solving model and strategic plan for treating persons who are in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system and doing so at the earliest point of contact, taking into consideration public safety. The planning grants will be used to develop strategies to divert individuals from judicial commitment to community-based service programs.

The implementation grants will support programs and diversion initiatives including specialized responses by law enforcement agencies; centralized receiving facilities for individuals evidencing behavioral difficulties; post-booking alternatives to incarceration; new court programs, including pretrial services and specialized dockets; specialized diversion programs; intensified transition services that are directed to the designated populations while they are in jail to facilitate the person's transition to the community; specialized probation and parole processes; day-reporting centers; linkages to community-based, evidence-based treatment programs for people who have mental illness or substance abuse problems; community services and programs designed to prevent criminal justice involvement of high-risk populations; and specialized training for criminal justice and treatment services professionals.

The legislation also includes an application process which requires counties to provide PCCD with detailed information on the county criminal justice system and how it interacts with individuals who have mental health problems. The PCCD will award the grants based on the amount of funds available. There are also monitoring and reporting requirements.

The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center was very helpful in drafting this legislation. The Senate and House Judiciary Committees and their staffs worked with the CSG Justice Center to address the issue of the involvement of mentally ill individuals with the criminal justice system. On June 4, 2007, the Senate and House Judiciary Committees held a joint public hearing to hear from CSG Justice Center experts and state officials who had been working with the Justice Center. In response to the CSG Justice Center's recommendations, this legislation was introduced. On April 18, 2008, the House Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Courts held a public hearing on this legislation.

*If you are interested in cosponsoring this legislation, please contact Pat Snively of my office by e-mailing her at [psnively@pasen.gov](mailto:psnively@pasen.gov).*