

**WASHINGTON INTENSIVE SUPERVISION PROGRAM**

**Evaluation Report**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Washington Intensive Supervision Program (WISP) is a pilot project designed to determine whether the principles of effective community supervision – clear rules, close monitoring, and swift and certain, but not severe, penalties for each violation – can succeed with a group of parolees of diverse risk levels in Seattle. WISP includes offenders with longer and more serious criminal histories than is typical of HOPE probationers in Honolulu, which provides an opportunity to test HOPE-style sanctioning on higher-risk offenders. Program fidelity to date has been extraordinarily high, and both individual performances and the level of coordination within DOC staff have been exemplary. Parolees appear to have a clear understanding of the program and are, for the most part, successfully adjusting their behavior to the new environment. Non-compliance has been consistently sanctioned. The workload burden, especially on the CCO dedicated to the program, was very high at first, but has begun to ease. While more time and additional data collection will be required before a comprehensive evaluation can be conducted, evidence so far points toward a successfully implemented program and positive outcomes.

Key findings from the outcomes evaluation show that, compared with control subjects, WISP subjects experienced:

- Reduced drug use
- Reduced incarceration
- Reduced criminal activity

However, WISP subjects were more likely to be the subjects of warrants.

A longer followup period is needed for a reliable assessment of the costs of WISP compared with routine supervision, but the reductions in incarceration and criminal activity suggest that WISP will likely yield sizable savings.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the City of Seattle agreed to collaborate with the Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) to launch the WISP pilot. The impetus came from Tim Burgess, the Chair of the Public Safety Committee of the Seattle City Council. Having heard about the success of Hawaii's HOPE program, Burgess persuaded the Mayor and the Police Chief to sign on to a letter to Eldon Vail, then Secretary of Corrections, asking for a trial of HOPE principles in Seattle. Secretary Vail approved the initiative, under the label Washington Intensive Supervision Program (WISP), and chose Field Administrator Donta Harper to lead the initiative and launch the pilot at the Seattle Community Justice Center. Donta Harper selected Reco Rowe to serve as the hearings officer for WISP cases, and tasked Community Corrections Supervisor Kimberli Dewing with selecting and supervising the community corrections officer (CCO) who would serve as the dedicated CCO for WISP cases. Kimberli Dewing selected Marki Schillinger from the group of CCOs who volunteered for the position. CCO Schillinger holds an M.A. Degree in Counseling Psychology and has nearly ten years of experience as a community corrections officer.

The program was implemented as a pilot effort. The purpose of the pilot is to test the effectiveness of using swift and certain, but modest, sanctions to address drug use and other violations of parole by parolees in Seattle. To evaluate whether the Seattle WISP pilot conforms to the procedural standards of HOPE as described by the HOPE Benchmarks, the City of Seattle contracted the services of Dr. Angela Hawken and Dr. Mark Kleiman who led the original HOPE study in Hawaii.

This report provides an overview of WISP operations, details the planned research design, and describes our assessment of the implementation of WISP. Comments and observations are based on two site visits (January and March, 2011), WISP-related materials collected, weekly teleconferences with the key staff involved with the pilot, interviews and discussions with WISP and parole-as-usual staff, administrative data held by DOC, and recordings of WISP orientation and violations hearings.

## BACKGROUND

Nationally, more than 50 percent of parolees and 37 percent of probationers fail to complete their sentences satisfactorily. Those high failure rates persist in spite of many local, state, and federal initiatives – including treatment-diversion programs – intended to improve offender outcomes. A new community-supervision model called HOPE, based on well-known psychological principles, has achieved much better results, both as a pilot program and in a randomized controlled trial, and is now operating at “production” scale in Honolulu. The program relies on swift and certain but modest sanctions (as little as two days in jail for the first violation) in response to *every* violation of any term of supervision, including failure to appear for an appointment and positive tests for illicit drugs.

In Hawaii, HOPE’s stated goals — reductions in drug use, new crimes, and incarceration among participants — have been achieved. Results of the initial pilot program among high-risk probationers within a special probation unit were confirmed in a large randomized controlled trial among general-population probationers. Even though HOPE probationers were subject to regular random drug testing (tested randomly at least six times per month for the first two months, with testing frequency stepped down to a low of one test per month for probationers demonstrating desistance from drug use) only 10 percent of HOPE probationers had three or more positive drug tests during the year following program entry. Unlike clients in standard drug-diversion programs, HOPE clients were not mandated to treatment except after repeated positive drug tests.

The average rate of missed appointments for probationers assigned to the HOPE condition was 9 percent compared with 23 percent for control probationers. The average percent of positive urine tests per probationer (as a percentage of tests taken) was 13 percent for HOPE probationers compared with 46 percent for control probationers. The new arrest rate was more than halved (21 percent for HOPE participants compared with 47 percent for controls). The same was true of probation revocations (7 percent v. 15 percent). Lower rates of revocation and new arrests led to greatly reduced prison time: HOPE probationers were sentenced, on average, to 129 fewer days in prison compared to control probationers (138 compared to 267).

The sizable reduction in prison stays and prison costs associated with HOPE has led many mainland states to implement similar interventions, including Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, and Texas. California was the first state to implement a HOPE pilot for parolees with the launch of the Sacramento HOPE pilot in November 2010. Two months later Washington launched its version of a HOPE pilot in Seattle, named the Washington Intensive Supervision Program (WISP). The WISP pilot is of national interest for many reasons:

1. WISP represents a mainland replication of the HOPE model on a higher-risk parolee population, and is implemented with great fidelity to the original model.
2. WISP is a field trial registered with the federal government, which makes it of great importance for determining whether HOPE-style programs deserve the status of Evidence-Based Programs.
3. WISP provides the first report of outcomes data and implementation issues for a HOPE model applied to parolees.
4. While the Hawaii population comprised mostly methamphetamine users, the Seattle population uses a wide range of drugs, including heroin.

## **OVERVIEW OF WISP OPERATIONS**

WISP provides modest, but swift and certain, jail sanctions for violations of conditions of parole. WISP differs substantially from parole-as-usual (PAU). Under PAU responses to violations tend to be sporadic (with many violations going unsanctioned or being met with verbal reprimands) and when given, tend to involve lengthy delays between the violation and the sanction. On the other hand, under PAU, any confinement sanction is likely to involve months rather than days behind bars.

Detecting violations and then delivering sanctions swiftly and with certainty requires a reconfiguration of parole operations. Many staff members had to make adjustments to their standard operational practices in order to deliver WISP with integrity. In Seattle, as with each of the other HOPE replication sites, the move toward a HOPE-style model required a great deal of public leadership.

## **The HOPE Principles**

The basic tenets of the HOPE program are swift, certain, consistent, and parsimonious use of clearly articulated sanctions. Each tenet is research-based. The design and implementation of HOPE sends a *consistent* message to probationers about personal responsibility and accountability. It includes *consistently* applied sanctions (delivered with *certainty*) and a *swift* mechanism (sanctions are imposed immediately) for dealing with probationer non-compliance. A clearly defined behavioral contract has been shown to enhance perceptions of the *certainty* of punishment which deters future deviance (Grasmack and Bryjak, 1980; Paternoster, 1989; Nichols and Ross, 1990, Taxman, 1999). Under HOPE, probationers are given clear instructions on the content and implications of their probation terms and the sentencing judge clearly lays out the rules of the probation program. A *swift* response to infractions improves the perception that the sanction is fair and is vital for shaping behavior (Rhine, 1993; Farabee, 2005). *Parsimonious* punishment—the least amount of punishment necessary to bring about behavior change—enhances the legitimacy of the sanction package and reduces the potential negative impacts of tougher sentences, such as long prison stays (Tonry, 1996). The delivery of a clear and explicit warning is in accord with the principles of procedural justice and enhances probationer perceptions of fairness, which in turn is an important factor in creating compliance rather than resistance.

Although WISP differs from HOPE in ways related to the differences between probation and parole and between Honolulu and Seattle, it shares each of the research-based tenets of the original HOPE program.

## **Composition of the WISP Team**

The core WISP pilot team consists of a hearings officer and a dedicated community corrections officer. In addition to the two core roles, Donta Harper (Field Administrator) and Kimberli Dewing (Community Corrections Supervisor), serve as the WISP leadership and maintain constant communication with the WISP team. Seattle law enforcement and DOC partners, and in particular, the Community Response Unit (CRU) respond swiftly to no-shows and absconders. Dr. Angela Hawken and Dr. Mark Kleiman have provided technical assistance and Dr. Hawken conducted the independent evaluation of WISP outcomes with the assistance of the Department of Corrections.

- The hearings officer provides orientation hearings (equivalent in function to the Warning Hearings in the original HOPE model) and issues sanctions at violation hearings (substituting for Motions to Modify Probation) in Hawaii.
- The community corrections officer coordinates the orientation and violation hearings, treatment and incarceration, monitors compliance with conditions of parole including curfews, and coordinates the CRU response to those who are missing or abscond.
- The community corrections officer also coordinates the drug testing. This is unusual. In other HOPE pilots, drug testing is performed by technicians. This issue is addressed in the section under workload impacts below.
- The Community Response Unit tracks down those who miss appointments or abscond and assists the CCO in monitoring compliance with curfews, address verification, and routine home visits.
- The independent researchers report on implementation issues, are responsible for research design decisions and prepare outcomes reports. The Department of Corrections exercises no editorial control over their reports.

## **OVERVIEW OF WISP PILOT RESEARCH DESIGN**

The WISP pilot includes an evaluation by an independent research team. Here we describe the details of the WISP research design.

### **Intent-to-Treat Randomized Controlled Trial**

The WISP pilot is an intent-to-treat (ITT) randomized controlled trial (meaning that the outcomes of eligible offenders are analyzed within the group to which they were originally randomized, irrespective of whether they were ever contacted by their parole agent, and irrespective of whether they formally entered the program through an orientation hearing). ITT is a conservative design for evaluating the impact of a policy. ITT is largely regarded as *the* most rigorous RCT approach and therefore adds to the credibility of the research and to possibilities for high-impact publications and dissemination of research findings.

The WISP pilot is a registered trial. The purpose of trial registration is to ensure transparency throughout the evaluation of the program; in particular, the flow of offenders through the research pipeline is regularly reported to the trial repository (eligibility, exclusions, and details of any subjects removed over the study period). Trial registration also requires that outcome results be posted to the repository (irrespective of whether the findings are positive or negative) and mandates the reporting of any “adverse” events such as a subject death by suicide.

WISP is registered with the largest trial repository, [www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov), which is managed by the federal government.

### **Human Subject Protection**

All aspects of the research design, data collection, data management, and data analysis are overseen by the Graduate Schools’ Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Pepperdine University. The role of the IRB is to ensure that study subjects are afforded appropriate protections and to ensure the integrity of all data received from the Washington State Department of Corrections.

### **Location of Research**

Parolees are supervised out of the Seattle Community Justice Center. The Seattle Community Justice Center includes field offices and offenders from the downtown “Metro” unit, Southeast Seattle unit, Special Assault Unit, Special Needs Unit, Seattle Day Reporting Center, and Hearings Administration unit.

### **Commencement of Pilot Program**

Parolees began entering the pilot program in February, 2011.

### **Length of Program**

WISP will last the length of parole supervision, and will run for at least 12 months for the purpose of the evaluation.

### **Eligibility**

All study subjects are male parolees with at least one year of supervision remaining. All subjects were Seattle residents when they begin the program. The study group includes all risk levels (High-Violent, High Non-Violent, Moderate, and Low). All subjects have at least one cause that is a prison release, and are under Community Custody Prison (what is

elsewhere called “parole”). Three supervision groups are excluded from eligibility: those supervised through the Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative (DOSA), the Special Sex Offender Sentencing Alternative (SSOSA), and those classified as Dangerously Mentally III and Level III Sex Offenders. WISP includes offenders with longer and more serious criminal histories than is typical of HOPE probationers in Honolulu. Some, but not all, have serious and long-lasting substance abuse disorders.

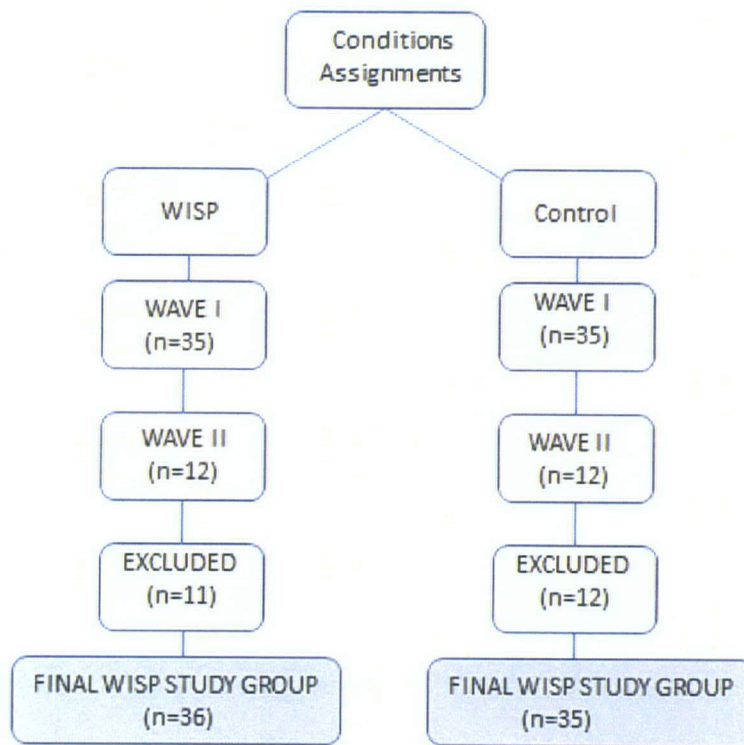
### **Size of Pilot Group**

The pilot group consists of 70 parolees, with 35 subjects randomly assigned to WISP and 35 assigned to parole-as-usual. A dedicated parole agent oversees the WISP caseload. The 35 control subjects (supervised under parole-as-usual) are blind to study inclusion and are dispersed among parole agents (the supervising parole agents are also blind to these subjects’ inclusion in the study).

### **Overview of Random Assignment to Study Condition**

Subjects identified as eligible for the study were randomly assigned to one of the two study conditions (WISP or Control) using third-party batch randomization with stratification (stratified on age, race/ethnicity, risk-level, and prior treatment exposure). Figure 1 reports the subject pipeline and shows the flow of subjects into final study groups. The randomization took place in two waves. The first wave of randomization occurred in February, 2011. In Wave I, 70 subjects were assigned to WISP or control (parole-as-usual). The groups were balanced, with 35 subjects assigned to each group.

**Figure 1. WISP Evaluation Subject Pipeline**



After the first wave of randomization it was discovered that 23 offenders (11 in the WISP group and 12 in control) originally deemed eligible for study inclusion were in fact ineligible. These subjects were removed from the participant lists. It is important to note that these subjects were WISP ineligible *before* the date of randomization and that their exclusion does not undermine the ITT randomization approach. The second wave of randomization was performed in March, 2011, six weeks after the initial draw. The second wave added 24 subjects (12 subjects assigned to each of the study conditions).

Subjects were deemed ineligible for the following reasons:

- Ten were originally deemed study-eligible in error; it was later found that they were supervised under DOSA prior to the date of randomization.
- Five of the excluded subjects had moved out of state (or were in the process thereof) prior to the date of randomization.

- Two were found to be Level III Sex Offenders at the time of WISP randomization and therefore ineligible for supervision under WISP.
- Three subjects were returned to prison between the time of the initial screening and the date of randomization (they were excluded because they were returned to prison *before* the date of randomization).
- One subject originally deemed study-eligible was later found to have less than one year of supervision left and was therefore ineligible for study inclusion.
- Two subjects originally deemed study eligible were later excluded due to new legislation that passed in Washington (ESSB 5891).

The number of subjects excluded from the WISP and control study conditions is similar and does not raise concerns regarding selective attrition.

### Description of Subjects

The random draw was designed to ensure balance across study conditions. Table 1 describes WISP and control subjects on race, age, and prior treatment experience. Our analysis of these data indicates that the randomization effectively balanced characteristics of study subjects across the WISP and control conditions. None of the between-group comparisons shown in Table 1 are statistically significant.

*Table 1. Comparison of WISP and Control subjects*

	<b>WISP</b>	<b>Control</b>
Age (mean years)	40	40
Race/Ethnicity*		
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.4%	4.3%
Black	34.0%	38.3%
Native American/Indian	4.3%	4.3%
White	53.2%	51.1%
Unknown	2.1%	2.1%
Previously Treated	55%	55%

\*Values do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW – WISP CONFORMANCE TO HOPE BENCHMARKS

We assessed WISP performance on the 12 HOPE Benchmarks-For-Success. Table 2 describes the HOPE Benchmarks, details our assessment of WISP performance in each category, and provides our rating.

Table 2. The WISP Scorecard – Implementation Performance on HOPE Benchmarks

	<b>BENCHMARK</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>WISP PERFORMANCE RATING</b>
<b>1</b>	Commitment of key players involved	The key players involved with the implementation of WISP have shown a strong commitment to the program procedures, including the Secretary of Corrections, the Field Administrator, Hearing Officer, Community Corrections Supervisor, the Community Corrections Officer, Jail Administrators, and law enforcement to apprehend no-shows and absconders.	Excellent
<b>2</b>	Responsive leader that fosters collaboration	The WISP leadership responds quickly to emergent issues and ensures the collaboration of all those involved. There are regular WISP teleconferences to ensure ongoing communication, to raise concerns regarding any potential barriers to successful implementation, and to propose solutions to addressing these potential barriers.	Excellent
<b>3</b>	Selection of	High-risk offenders were targeted, including	Excellent

	offenders	violent offenders. The typical WISP subject has a significantly longer and more-serious criminal history than the typical HOPE subject in Hawaii. Given the small sample size and limited followup period, for the purpose of statistical analysis it might have been preferable to limit study eligibility to those offenders with a known history of drug use.	
4	Scale of pilot	WISP complies with the recommended sample size for pilot sites. The recommendation is that the pilot number of offenders not exceed 35-50 in the experimental condition. The smaller scale helps to identify and resolve the inevitable challenges that arise. The WISP caseload is 35 and falls within the recommended range.	Excellent
5	Offender warning	WISP provides appropriate notification to clearly communicate program expectations and consequences to the offenders and to encourage the offenders' compliance and success. The WISP script was modeled on the original HOPE script. The consultants worked closely with Hearing Officer Rowe to make the necessary adjustments to the script to meet the needs of the jurisdiction while maintaining the underlying tenets of the HOPE program (swiftness, and certainty, and relative lenience for assuming personal responsibility). Officer Rowe has an impressive voice and a	Excellent

		relaxed but authoritative manner that appears to command respect from the clients. He makes the necessary points clearly and concisely.	
6	Drug testing procedure	The WISP drug testing procedure has a number of strengths. WISP uses regular random drug tests and the test kits provide instant results. But the testing procedure as implemented initially presented some problems. Due to the small scale of WISP, the dedicated parole agent is also required to supervise the drug testing. In other jurisdictions this task is assigned to a parole agent assistant. The dedicated WISP parole agent is female and is unable to administer the observed drug tests (the pilot subjects are male). Initially, the parole agent needed to seek out the assistance of a male parole agent (on an as-needed basis) each time a parolee arrived for a random drug test. This need to constantly solicit favors from other agents placed a significant burden on the dedicated parole agent. The consultants raised this concern and the CCO was later given assistance in this area. This has improved the drug testing component considerably.	Good
7	Immediacy of arrests and/or issuance of warrants	Positive drug tests (or admissions of drug use) and no-shows result in an immediate arrest and/or issuance of a warrant. The immediacy of response by the parole agent and by law enforcement personnel,	Excellent

		specifically by the Community Response Unit (CRU) is impressive. The strong collaboration between parole agent Marki Schillinger and CRU, and the responsiveness of CRU to WISP needs is the best we have observed across all the jurisdictions we work with. An early no-show for a morning orientation hearing was in custody that afternoon, and subsequent orientations make that fact known to new WISP entrants.	
8	Swift hearings for violations	Violation hearings held swiftly (within a few days) after a violation occurs and offenders are held in custody pending their hearing.	Excellent
9	Certainty of sanctions for violations	Hearing officer Reco Rowe is extremely effective at delivering HOPE-style sanctions under WISP. Violations are met with certain consequences (we know of no case where a violation was not sanctioned), and the jail sentences given are appropriate given the circumstances of the violation. WISP is unusual compared to other HOPE implementations in sometimes using a curfew as an additional sanction after the service of jail time.	Excellent
10	Expedited warrant service	No-shows and absconders are apprehended quickly. The warrant service under WISP is the best we have seen across all jurisdictions.	Excellent
11	Drug treatment	We don't yet have enough experience with WISP to evaluate the drug treatment component of WISP. We will continue to	<i>Unrated</i>

		observe WISP to assess whether sufficient resources are in place to provide drug treatment (outpatient or residential treatment) for those offenders who request treatment or who fail to achieve and sustain abstinence with WISP monitoring and consequences alone.	
12	Independent research	The Department of Corrections has shared routinely collected administrative data with the independent consultants and has been responsive to followup requests and queries. In addition, WISP is a registered randomized controlled trial, and all WISP findings will be publicly disseminated through the clinical trials repository.	Excellent

## SIX MONTH OUTCOMES

Below we compare outcomes for WISP and control parolees at six month followup. Because of the small sample size, the results reported below should be considered suggestive of general trends, rather than conclusive, but they do indicate areas in which WISP is likely to reduce or add to the costs of community supervision.

### Drug Testing under WISP

Parolees assigned to WISP are required to call a hotline each business day to determine whether they need to report for a random drug test at the field office. WISP uses drug test kits with instant results.

### Drug Use

#### 1. Frequency of testing

WISP involves regular random drug testing of parolees. Over the study period, the average WISP parolee was drug tested nineteen times. By contrast, parolees in the control group were tested an average of fewer than four times each.

#### 2. Positive test rate

WISP was associated with a decrease in the positive drug tests rate of nearly two-thirds: 18.7% of drug tests submitted by the control group were positive compared with 6.8% for WISP. Even with the small sample size, this is a statistically significant finding. It is especially impressive given that the parolees-as-usual have advance warning about tests, while WISP clients are tested at random without warning.

The positive test rates for both groups are lower than those in Hawaii. This difference is likely due to how subjects were screened into the study, which impacts baseline drug-use levels. In the Hawaii RCT, *all* of the participants entering the study were drug-involved.

#### 3. Positive drug tests and exposure to WISP

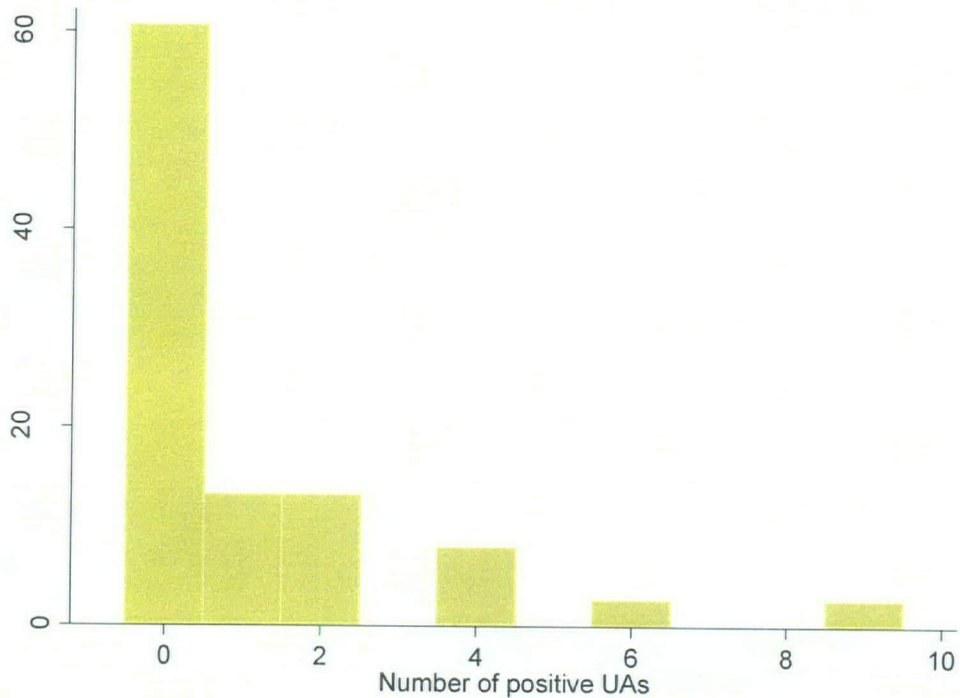
The time-pattern of the WISP positive drug tests is similar to the pattern observed for HOPE probationers in Hawaii. The positive drug tests were front-loaded, i.e., WISP subjects were more likely to test positive when they were first introduced to WISP (70% were within the first 90 days). As exposure to WISP increased, the number of positive drug tests declined.

This suggests that a one-year followup evaluation will likely demonstrate even more-promising drug use outcomes than a six-month followup.

#### 4. *WISP and "Behavioral Triage"*

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the number of positive drug tests for the WISP parolees (note: we cannot compare the WISP distribution with the control group's because of the difference in the frequency of testing). The triage pattern expected with HOPE-style supervision is apparent, in spite of the WISP pilot's small sample size. Most WISP subjects have tested negative for each drug test taken over the study period, or only have a few positives, but there is a small number who test positive multiple times (13% of WISP subjects have had more than two positive drug tests in the six month followup). Thus the WISP subjects are, in effect, triaging themselves into those who are able to comply with conditions requiring desistance from drug use and those who cannot. The WISP distribution is similar to what researchers have observed at other HOPE sites.

**Figure 2. Distribution of Positive Drug Tests**



### **Hearings**

Since WISP clients face a much tighter supervisory regime than they have been used to in previous experiences on probation or parole, an essential part of the WISP program involves warning parolees about the change in supervision under WISP. Each parolee assigned to the WISP group appears before a hearing officer for an orientation hearing, shortly after assignment to WISP. The orientation hearings take place at the Seattle Community Justice Center. The evaluation team attended orientation and violation hearings in person and listened to many others via a telephone conference line.

Prior to attending the orientation hearing, parolees are briefed on WISP conditions by their CCO. These conditions are then re-stated during the formal orientation hearing. Parolees receive a thorough explanation of WISP during these hearings, and are advised of what is expected of them. The hearings officer stresses that WISP is different from parole-as-usual. The hearings officer makes clear that drug testing will be frequent and random and that

failure to appear for a drug test or testing positive for an illicit substance will result in a period of incarceration and that the duration of incarceration will increase with continued non-compliance or if it becomes necessary to issue a warrant for non-appearance. The hearing officer stresses that the purpose of WISP is to avoid negative behavior, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that the parolee completes his supervision term successfully. Personal responsibility is a major theme during the orientation. Parolees are informed that those who deny or lie about drug use or other violation behaviors will receive more severe sanctions. And very importantly, they are instructed that failure to appear for drug testing is considered more serious than a positive test, and that sanctions will be enhanced in that case. Parolees who take responsibility for their actions by openly admitting to drug use or other violation behaviors receive less severe sanctions.

The average duration of WISP hearings is an important measure to track as the relative costs of operating a program such as WISP compared with routine supervision will influence the decision whether to replicate or expand this type of program. We audio recorded orientation hearings and calculated an average duration of approximately 17 minutes. However, orientation hearings tend to be held "en-masse." Multiple parolees are warned during a single hearing, resulting in a per-parolee court time of approximately 6 minutes. If operated at scale, a larger number of parolees could attend each en-masse warning, which would further reduce the per-parolee court time needed for offender orientations (other HOPE sites have reduced the per-offender court time to approximately 3 minutes).

Violation hearings are conducted by the hearing officer and take place at the jail. The CCO attends all of the hearings (orientation and violation hearings). This is unusual. Other HOPE sites only require that the agent attend if the hearing is contested or if their presence is otherwise deemed necessary. The presence of the CCO at all hearings has workload implications (see workload issues below). We audio recorded violation hearings and found a typical violation hearing lasts about 18 minutes, about twice as long as a Motion to Modify hearing in Hawaii.

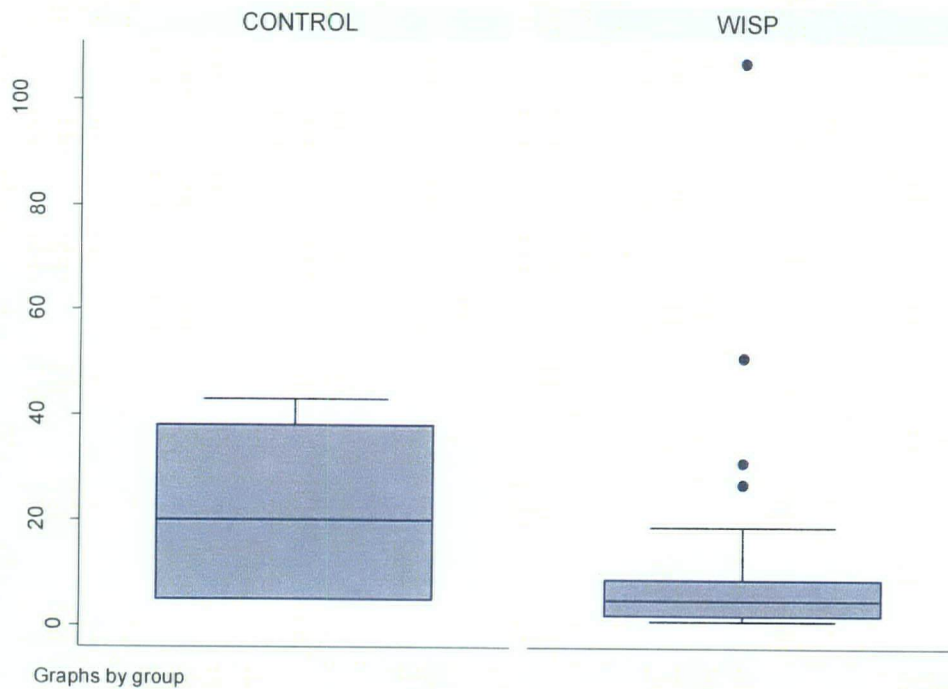
## Warrants

A failure to appear for random drug testing or for a routine office visit leads to the immediate issuance of a warrant under WISP, which the CRU serves. There were more than twice as many warrants issued for WISP subjects than for control (33 compared with 15).

The randomized controlled trial of HOPE subjects in Hawaii showed a larger number of warrants issued for HOPE probationers at the 6 month followup compared with control, but this reversed by the one-year followup. It is hard to predict whether the same will hold true for WISP.

The strong collaboration between parole agent Marki Schillinger and CRU, and the responsiveness of CRU to WISP needs is impressive. We found WISP warrants were cleared more quickly than control warrants. A typical (median) warrant in the control group was cleared within 20 days, whereas a typical warrant in the WISP group was cleared within 5 days. The full distribution of the number of days to clear a warrant is shown in Boxplots in Figure 3. Nearly a third of the WISP warrants were cleared within 24 hours, whereas the shortest warrant clearance for the control group was 5 days.

**Figure 3. Boxplots of Days to Clear Bench Warrants**



Note: The Boxplots show that warrants in the control group take substantially longer to clear than warrants in the WISP group, with the exception of the extreme outlier (closed in 107 days). There is also much greater variation in the number of days to clear a warrant for the control group.

Both WISP and control have two open warrants (not reflect in Figure 5); thus far WISP has not increased the number of persons at large.

### **New Crimes**

At the six month followup the study subjects in the control group had been found guilty of four new felony crimes (description of felonies: 1 “sex”, 1 “drug”, 2 “other”), while the WISP group had generated only one new felony (description of felony: 1 “property”). These data suggest WISP is associated with a statistically significant reduction in crime, but a longer followup period is needed to support a credible assessment of differences in criminal activity under WISP.

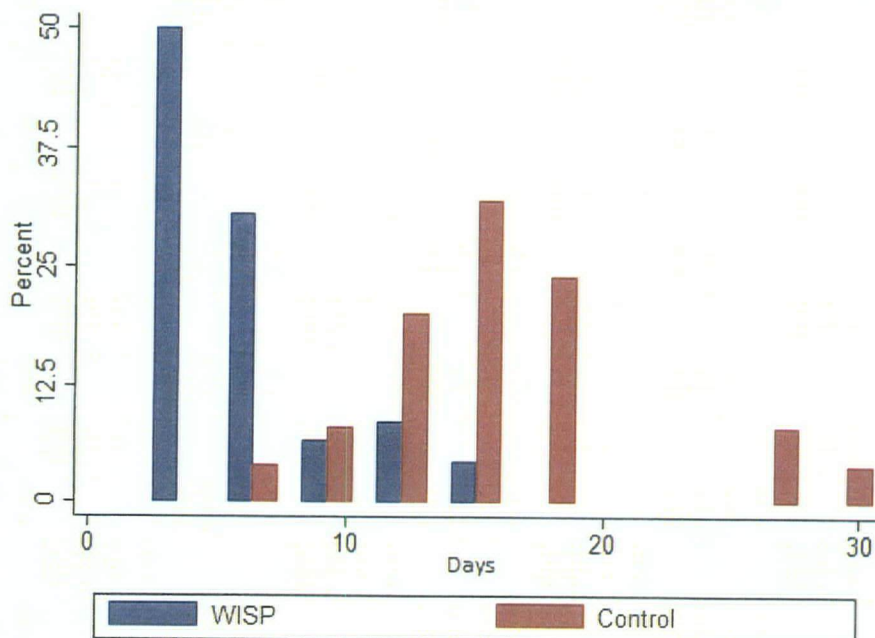
## Incarceration

The WISP leadership has established a good relationship with the staff of the jail where WISP violators are housed. Jail beds are available for WISP violators and conducting the WISP violation hearings at the jail seems to be working very well.

### a. Pre-hearing confinement

WISP resulted in substantial reductions in confinement days pending a hearing. Figure 6 shows the distribution of pre-hearing wait times for WISP and control subjects, with control subjects facing significantly longer wait times. Subjects assigned to the control group spent an average of 16.0 days in jail awaiting a hearing compared with 5.7 days for WISP (this includes WISP and full hearings). The average wait time for a WISP hearing was 4 days. The pre-hearing wait for WISP subjects is similar to the wait time observed in Hawaii (where 75% of subjects appeared before a judge within three days).

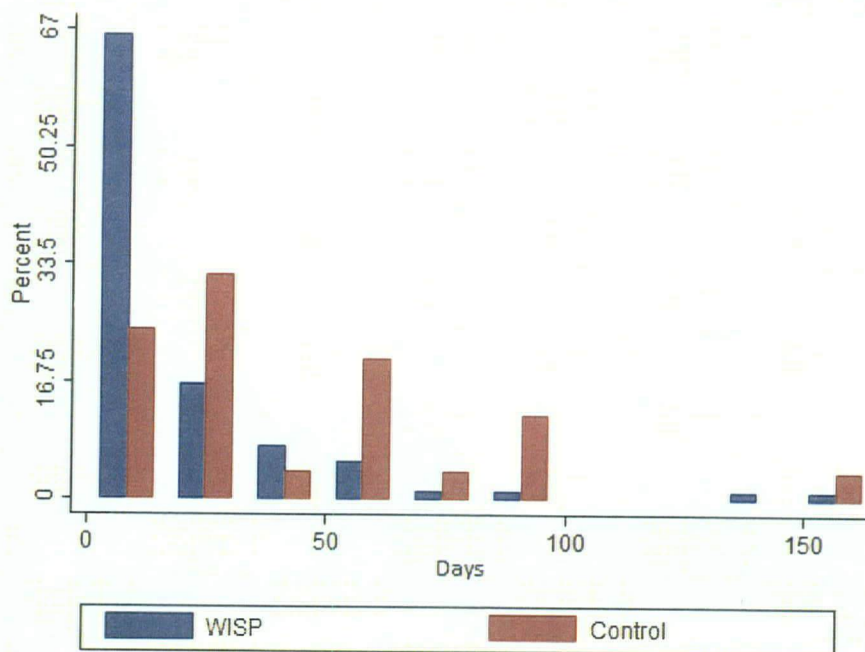
**Figure 6. Distribution of pre-hearing jail confinement days**



### b. Jail Confinement

WISP resulted in substantial reductions in jail days sentenced. Figure 7 shows the distribution of jail sanction days for WISP and control subjects, with control subjects facing significantly longer jail stays. Subjects assigned to the control group were sentenced to an average of 44.5 days in jail compared with 20.5 for WISP (this includes WISP and full hearings). The average jail sentence for WISP violation hearing was 16 days (median = 8).

**Figure 7. Distribution of jail sanctions (in days sentenced)**



*c. Prison Confinement*

There were significant differences in the duration of confinement for subjects sentenced to DOC facilities. The average duration for a control subject sentenced to DOC confinement was 77 days (median = 60), versus 29 days (median = 15) for WISP.

*d. Overall Incarceration*

WISP led to an increase in the total number of confinement episodes, but a smaller number of days served. Overall, WISP resulted in a reduced number of incarceration days but a longer followup period is needed to produce reliable estimates.

## **WISP WORKLOAD ISSUES**

While we expect WISP has workload implications for many officials involved, our discussion is focused on the dedicated WISP parole agent, Marki Schillinger. Seattle is the only jurisdiction with a single parole agent dedicated to HOPE-style supervision. In other jurisdictions the HOPE-style caseloads are either divided among agents, or there is more than one dedicated HOPE agent. The advantage of having multiple agents overseeing the HOPE-style caseloads is the natural camaraderie and support that develops among the agents; they can celebrate program's successes together and have someone to commiserate with during the relatively high-workload (and sometimes frustrating) early months following implementation. They are also able to distribute workload and back each other up when needed.

The dedicated CCO was assigned her WISP caseload during the two waves of randomization. These assigned cases were added to WISP en-masse in the two waves, rather than being added sequentially to the caseload. HOPE violations tend to be "front-loaded;" most of the negative behavior occurs within the first few months of assignment to WISP. Given that the dedicated parole agent attends all hearings (orientation and violation hearings) and supervises the observed drug tests (with the added burden of needing to seek out a male parole agent willing to oversee the test), there were times when her personal capacity was strained by her WISP responsibilities. Marki Schillinger went above and beyond to accommodate the increase in her workload. Much of the workload pressure she experienced is due to the small scale of the pilot. Jurisdictions supervising a larger number of cases enjoy what are referred to as "economies of scale." If WISP were operating at a larger scale, a technician position to handle the random drug testing would be justified.

Looking forward, we expect the workload burden on the dedicated CCO will diminish. All the WISP participants have now been through their orientation hearings, and the rate of

violation hearings typically diminishes over time as clients learn that sanctions are credible. And in response to concerns raised about the CCO workload, the DOC has provided additional support to the WISP CCO.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The key staff involved with the implementation of WISP was hand-picked for the task and the implementation of the WISP pilot has been exemplary. Donta Harper provided the leadership needed to ensure the cooperation of the many moving parts. The dedicated WISP CCO, Marki Schillinger, is especially talented and has shown an impressive dedication to her clients and to the WISP research project. Thanks to the strong pilot team, WISP fidelity to the original HOPE model has been extraordinarily high.

The six-month followup outcomes are promising, but conclusions are limited by the small sample size and the short duration of the followup period. The six-month followup data suggest that WISP is associated with sizable reductions in drug use, incarceration, and new crimes, but is associated with an increase in bench warrants issued. Because the WISP study will be of interest to policymakers in Washington and across the country, outcomes should be re-evaluated at the one-year followup.

The cost and workload implications of WISP warrant further study and should take into account the scale issues involved. The per-parolee cost of operating WISP for a few dozen parolees will be very different from the cost if the program is expanded to several hundred or thousand parolees because of scale economies.

Regular drug testing of parolees who do not have a history of drug use adds to the cost of operating the program, increases the workload burden of the CCO and imposes an undue burden on the parolee. While the underlying tenets of WISP – swift and certain but modest sanctions for parole violations – would apply to all parolees, regular random drug testing should be reserved for those parolees who are identified as drug-involved, or who test positive during a routine office visit.

Parole agents are not able to monitor all behavior and it is important that they retain some degree of discretion. Distinguishing violations for which parole agents have discretion to refer cases to a WISP hearing (such as demonstrating efforts to secure employment) from

zero-tolerance violations (such as positive drug tests or missed appointments) that *must* be referred to the WISP hearings officer would benefit WISP agents and WISP participants and would make WISP operations more efficient.