

Follow-up from Joint Meetings of the House and Senate Appropriations on Justice and Public Safety 2/09/2023

Long term care facility: 1) Staff Salaries and 2) Minimum Staffing Thresholds for Partial Operation

Demand for long-term palliative care in our prisons has grown along with the aging offender population. **Session Law 2021-180 appropriated funds (FY 2022-23: \$7.2 M R and 77 FTE) for a Long-term care facility at Central Prison** to alleviate the need for more costly services from outside health Care. Only 3 of the 77 positions have been filled; these three are Health Care Technician II positions. Table 1 below shows the composition of staffing for the facility and the average salary for each position.

Table 1: Long Term Care Facility Staffing and Salary

| Position Title | Count | Average Budgeted Salary |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Administrative Specialist II | 1 | \$ 37,577 |
| Chaplain I | 1 | \$ 54,252 |
| Charge Nurse | 1 | \$ 63,552 |
| Correctional Officer III | 31 | \$ 40,351 |
| Health Care Technician II | 12 | \$ 35,127 |
| Housekeeper | 2 | \$ 28,317 |
| Housekeeper Supervisor II | 1 | \$ 34,084 |
| Licensed Practical Nurse | 12 | \$ 46,885 |
| Nurse Supervisor II | 1 | \$ 74,128 |
| Pharmacist | 1 | \$ 132,405 |
| Physical Therapist | 1 | \$ 86,213 |
| Physician | 1 | \$ 210,088 |
| Registered Nurse | 11 | \$ 67,804 |
| Respiratory Therapist | 1 | \$ 46,971 |
| Total FTE | 77 | \$ 68,411 |

The Department of Adult Correction (DAC) is still working through a minimum staffing threshold solution required to open a portion of the long-term care facility at Central Prison.

Are tuition exemptions offered to offenders who are enrolled in community colleges while incarcerated?

There are **41 community colleges (out of a total of 58) in the State that have partnered with prisons** to provide basic education, high school equivalency (diploma), and vocational classes. These **classes are offered to offenders at no cost**. The General Assembly appropriates funding for offender education. **In FY 2022-23 \$3.7 M was allotted for DAC to make payments for community colleges for classes in prisons.**

How have Community College operations in prisons been challenged by staffing vacancies?

Community colleges provide vocational and academic classes in prisons. Generally, classes are provided by part-time instructors, who are paid hourly. When prisons do not have adequate custody staff (to supervise offenders and ensure the safety of the instructor) **prisons have postponed and canceled classes a day/week/or month at a time, as needed and correction staffing challenges dictate**. Of the 53 prison facilities, 50 have classes planned with community colleges. As of January 2023, prisons and community colleges have planned a total of 330 classes. However, only 174 (54%) of planned classes have been held.

The unpredictability of class being held as planned impacts a community colleges' ability retain instructors. Because most **community college instructors are part-time and paid hourly for time while class is in-session** with students, **class cancelations have a negative impact on instructor earnings**. DAC reported instances of **community college instructor attrition** as result of class unpredictability that ultimately results in **reduced instructor earnings**. Instructor attrition has impacted class offerings at correction facilities.

Follow-up from Joint Meetings of the House and Senate Appropriations on Justice and Public Safety 2/14/2023

How are full-time and part-time corrective programs defined?

The distinction between full and part-time corrective programs is related to the amount of time a program is offered and not an offender’s participation in a program. Corrective **programs offered 28 hours per week, or more are considered full time programs.**

Overview and Spending of Statewide Misdemeanant Confinement Program Litter Pilot

Session Law 2021-180 appropriated **\$3.5M NR** over the fiscal biennium **for a pilot project** that provides **funding to sheriffs**, participating in the Statewide Misdemeanant Confinement Program (SMCP) **to form litter crews** to pick up refuse along State roads. The pilot increases the per inmate reimbursement rate from \$40 to \$60 per day. Participating Sheriffs' Offices must document participating inmates performed a combined 500 hours of labor and the road miles serviced by litter crews.

Of the \$1M appropriated in FY 2021-22 for the pilot, **three counties were reimbursed a total of \$146,040** for participating the pilot. The table below shows each county, the number of road miles services and amount each was reimbursed from the SMCP.

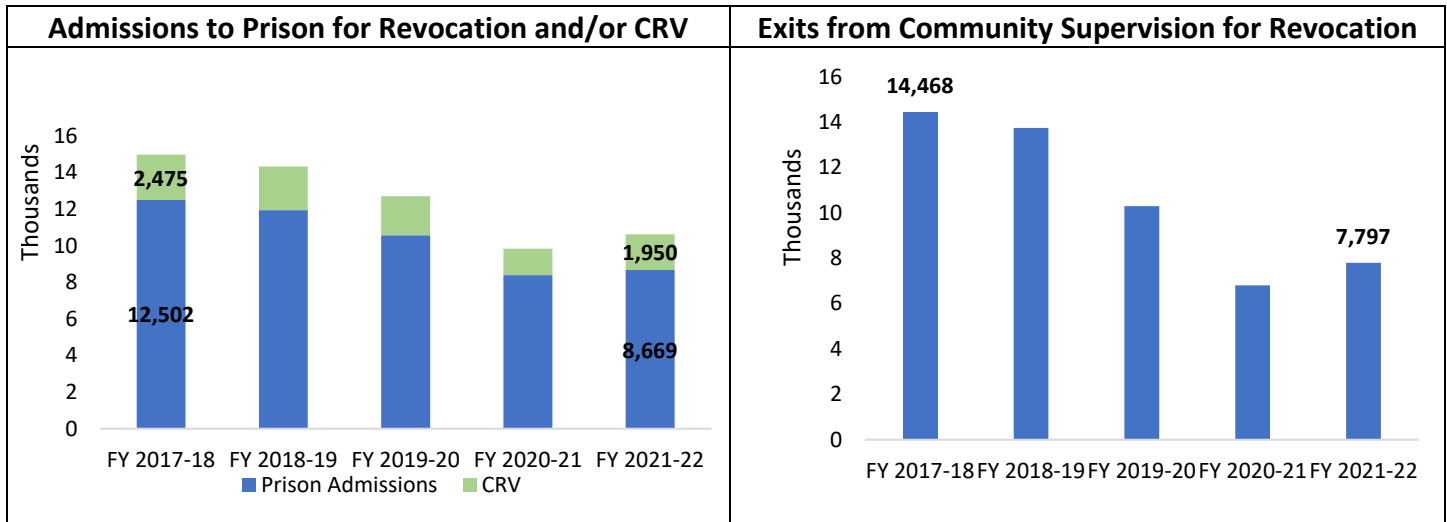
| County | Road Miles | Labor Hours | Reimbursement |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Bladen | 402.3 | 3,790 | \$108,240 |
| Northampton | 181 | 1,023 | \$26,840 |
| Yancy | 201.5 | 1,024.75 | \$10,960 |
| Total | 784.3 | 5,837.75 | \$146,040 |

Note: Due to COVID related staffing shortages and winter conditions, counties did not begin participating in the program until January 2022.

As of November 2022, the three counties have been reimbursed a total of \$171 k in FY 2022-23.

Five Fiscal Year History of Revocations

The two graphs provide a **5-year trend of revocation data**. The graph on the right show admissions to prison from revocations, the left show exits from community supervision for revocation. As the graphs show, data for admissions to prison for revocations and exits from community supervision for revocations produce different statistics. This is because an offender may have multiple sentences involving different situations that can cause them to be included as an exit from community supervision for revocation, but not as a prison admission for revocation. Or the offender can be a prison admission for revocation, but not an exit from community supervision for revocation. Nevertheless, trends for each **are downward, mirroring overall crime and incarceration trends.**



Telehealth and Offender Health Services

The General Assembly passed **Session Law 2019-13**, implementing policies aimed at improving inmate health services and reducing cost. Among which was a directive to **pilot telemedicine for offenders**. Since the pilot, Adult Correction **reports positive results that reflect cost avoidance, secondary staffing benefits, and reduced risk**.

DAC partnered with UNC Health to implement Telemedicine in June 2020. The Department initially started telehealth in 5 clinics with 6 providers. **Today, telehealth for offenders is supported by 56 clinics and 61 providers**. The total number of encounters since implementation exceeded 20 k in 2022 and continues to grow. DAC estimates the **total cost avoidance** for implementing Telehealth **exceeds \$10.2 M** and increases with each clinic day by \$ 23 k. The table below show the number of encounters and cost avoidance each year since being implemented in 2020.

| Year | Encounters | Cost Avoidance |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| CY 2020 | 4,022 | \$1.8 M |
| CY 2021 | 8,726 | \$ 3.9 M |
| CY 2022 | 10,029 | \$4.5 M |
| Total | 22,777 | \$10.3 M |

In addition to the cost avoidance, DAC reports secondary benefits to staffing and safety from implementing telemedicine. **Two correction officers (COs) are required for every outside medical appointment. Telehealth encounters allow COs to remain onsite**, reducing pressure on already stressed staffing conditions. Staffing burdens are further reduced when **nurses in one facility can use telehealth to conduct appointments with offenders in different facilities across the state from a central location**. Lastly, **not having to remove offenders from a secure setting for medical assistance, reduces risk, improving safety**.