

## **PSU: PA youth crime prevention efforts produce major results.**

Text of June 27 press release.

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA -- A \$60 million investment by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) over the last decade in evidence-based programs across the state has resulted in a \$317 million return on just seven of those programs, according to a report by the Penn State Prevention Research Center.

All programs involve prevention strategies that address youth crime and violence, including mentoring programs, school-based skill building programs, family strengthening programs, and individual and family therapy for juvenile offenders. The seven programs--Big Brothers Big Sisters, LifeSkills Training, Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Strengthening Families 10-14--were found to offer a positive cost-benefit ratio ranging from \$54 to nearly \$80,000 per youth, collectively representing a total statewide return of over \$317 million.

Study results reveal that by reducing arrests, drug and alcohol treatment, victimization, welfare and social service usage and increasing school performance, graduation rates, employment and subsequent tax revenue, these prevention programs not only pay for themselves but generate a significant return on investment of between \$1 and \$26 for every dollar spent.

"These programs have been carefully researched and proven to prevent and reduce youth violence, delinquency and drug use, improving developmental outcomes for children and families," said Dr. Mark Greenberg, director of the Penn State Prevention Research Center.

"The results are indisputable: these programs are not only effective for families, they are also a cost-effective, wise investment of taxpayer dollars that will continue to pay dividends for years to come."

"We've made very deliberate, thoughtful investments in programs that we know work," said Michael Pennington, director of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. "It is one thing to get tough on crime, but we also need to be smart about preventing kids from becoming the next generation of adult criminals."

The report reveals that the adoption of policies developed to ensure a greater investment in prevention and promotion of the use of evidence-based programs will ultimately result in fewer prison admissions. The programs have the very real potential to reduce the juvenile and adult prison population over time. A reduction of only 5 percent in the number of adults and juveniles locked up in one year would free nearly \$84 million to support new or expanded prevention programs.

"Pennsylvania is facing a prison overcrowding crisis and the Department of Corrections is asking for nearly \$700 million to build more prison cells," said Brian Bumbarger, director of policy research and outreach for the Penn State Prevention Research Center and co-author of the report. "Given the current rate of inmate population growth, the Commonwealth can spend \$700 million on new prison construction and we'll still be overcrowded by more than 9,000 inmates within 5 years. Investing in prevention programs that work is the only way we're going to get a handle on prison overcrowding over the next decade."

The full report, *The Economic Return on PCCD's Investment in Research-based Programs: A Cost-benefit Assessment of Delinquency Prevention in Pennsylvania*, is available on the Penn State Prevention Research Center's website at [www.prevention.psu.edu](http://www.prevention.psu.edu).

Contact: Brian Bumbarger is at 814-865-2617 or at [bkb10@psu.edu](mailto:bkb10@psu.edu).