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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION AND REHABILITATION

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Chairman Mail

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Arthur M. Wallenstein
Director

April 10, 2008

Dear Colleagues:

Line correctional staff and administrators in the nation's 3,000+ jails are embracing an expanded mission that recognizes our public safety obligation to focus on the release process and reentry preparation of the 12 million individuals who leave our facilities each year. Excellence in **Care, Custody, and Control** must always remain the foundation of our work, but as a field, we have now begun to add a fourth "C" to our mantra: **Community**. We recognize that our facilities are community institutions, and that many of our releasees are at high risk for re-offending and causing greater victimization, have serious mental health problems, lack viable housing and job prospects, and can add to the instability of already fragile families and neighborhoods. We need to pay attention to not only what happens behind the wall, but our impact on our surrounding communities.

In an effort to build knowledge on the challenges and practices of reentry from jail, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance invested in the Jail Reentry Roundtable Initiative, a joint project of the Urban Institute, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and the Montgomery County (Maryland) Department of Correction and Rehabilitation. Over the last couple years we have commissioned seven papers, convened a Jail Reentry Roundtable and two national advisory meetings, conducted a "scan of practice," and interviewed practitioners from around the country. Hundreds of correctional staff and other stakeholders have contributed directly to this Initiative. All of this material is available at www.urban.org/projects/reentry-roundtable/roundtable9.cfm.

As chair of the Jail Reentry Roundtable Initiative, I am pleased to announce two new reports that synthesize what we have learned through these efforts. *Life after Lockup: Improving Reentry from Jail to the Community* synthesizes the unique challenges and opportunities of reentry from jail and highlights local reentry efforts around the country. *The Jail Administrator's Toolkit for Reentry* is a practical guide for jail administrators and local correctional staff to address community reentry issues. These reports are the first national resources to address the millions of releases from jail each year, and join the larger literature on reentry that heretofore has focused exclusively on release from prisons.

On this topic, we have come far in a short period of time. On April 9, 2008 President Bush signed the Second Chance Act that explicitly includes jails in funding and research on promising reentry practices. This comes only five years after a pivotal meeting in Branson, Missouri of the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee of the National Association of Counties where 100 elected county officials first publicly raised the importance of focusing on reentry from jail. Our progress owes a debt of gratitude to the dynamic leadership of the Bureau of Justice Assistance that has funded our work, and to the expert guidance and planning skills of organizations such as the Urban Institute and John Jay College. We still have a long way to go to infuse all of our nation's jails with promising and evidenced-based reentry practices, but reports like those enclosed are pointing us in the right direction.

I am pleased to share these reports with you and applaud the leadership of jail staff across the country that are embracing our collective mission of **Care, Custody, Control, and Community**.

Sincerely,



Arthur Wallenstein
Chair of Jail Reentry Advisory Group

ATTACHMENTS AVAILABLE
FROM YOUR CLERK

Enclosures