

HAWAII SUBSTANCE ABUSE COALITION

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March 15, 2010

Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 210
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Via Facsimile: 587-7205

RE: HOPE Probation

Dear Senator Kim:

The Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC) supports Project HOPE (Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement). This program, launched by the First Circuit Court in 2004, is the first and only of its kind in the nation. Probationers in HOPE Probation receive swift, predictable, and immediate sanctions – typically resulting in several days in jail – for each detected violation, such as detected drug use or missed appointments with a probation officer.

Further, Judge Alms does refer to treatment for some offenders who are motivated yet need more help than sanctions. We believe that Judge Alms is most effective because he genuinely cares such that the offenders realize that the sanctions are in their best interest to help them change and if they are motivated yet unable to change by sanctions alone, he will refer them to treatment. Mandated treatment can be effective. Treatment combined with sanctions from HOPE produces better outcomes than just treatment alone.

Treatment agencies who are part of the Coalition report that outcomes with HOPE probationers have been very positive. HOPE probationers are definitely more responsive than other (non-HOPE probationers or parolees). When dealing with HOPE probationers, treatment counselors get a better and timelier response from both the probationers as well as from their probation officers. The reality of immediate consequences helps to motivate probationers as well as improve accountability. A weekend in jail causes sliding probationers to "wake up".....even the prospect of a potential few days of jail time certainly gets the attention of most HOPE probationers. Consequently, HOPE probationers are more engaged in treatment, which results in improved outcomes.

Evaluation results indicate that project HOPE, by imposing sanctions for each probation violation, is highly successful at reducing drug use and crime, even among difficult

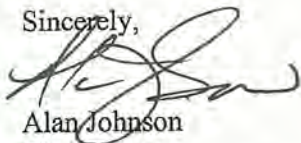
populations such as methamphetamine abusers and domestic violence offenders. In a one-year, randomized controlled trial comparing HOPE probationers to probationers in a control group, HOPE probationers were 55% less likely to be arrested for a new crime, 72% less likely to use drugs, 61% less likely to skip appointments with their supervisory officer, and 53% less likely to have their probation revoked.

Project HOPE when supported by treatment is most cost-effective. When offenders do re-offend, the cost for incarceration is enormous, approaching \$50,000 per year. However, Project HOPE applies sanctions, which work for a large percentage, and refers to treatment for those who are motivated but not drug free through sanctions alone. The result is that he does incarcerate a very few minority. As a front line response and alternative to expensive incarceration, the savings per year are tremendous and also have future savings. Even more, those in recovery become productive tax payers. So yes....TREATMENT WORKS.....WORKS EVEN BETTER FOR HOPE PROBATIONERS!

HSAC supports increased funding for Project HOPE. Very definitely, the HOPE Program needs to be expanded in scope to include a greater percentage of the probation (and even parolee) population. Also, we believe that resources and funding for a continuum of care (e.g., outpatient and residential substance abuse treatment) should be available for offenders who request treatment and/or fail to achieve and sustain abstinence with monitoring and consequences alone.

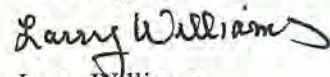
We look forward to working with Project HOPE to reduce the number of probationers that are re-incarcerated due to revocation of their parole status.

Sincerely,



Alan Johnson
Chairperson
Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC)
President and CEO
Hina Mauka Recovery Center

Sincerely,



Larry Williams
Board of Directors
HSAC
Executive Director
Salvation Army ATS