

# JRSA Electronic News

A biweekly briefing for members

April 24, 2009

## SAC News

**Ivan Kuzyk** was recently appointed Director of the Connecticut Statistical Analysis Center (SAC). He is a Lead Planning Analyst in the Research Unit of the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management's Criminal Justice Division. Prior to joining OPM last year, Mr. Kuzyk was consultant to a variety of organizations including the United States Attorney's Office in Connecticut, where he analyzed gun crime in Connecticut cities and evaluated the Project Safe Neighborhoods Program. Prior to his work with the USAO, he directed an urban research center at Trinity College in Hartford. Originally trained as an electrical engineer, Kuzyk has been involved in criminal justice research for almost a decade. He is currently working on several projects relating to recidivism, population forecasting, and offender assessments. Former SAC Director **Stephen Cox** remains active in criminal justice research in Connecticut as a professor at Central Connecticut State University.

**Dr. Stephen M. Haas**, director of West Virginia's Criminal Justice SAC, is a recipient of the 2009 *Visionary Voice Award* given by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). This award recognizes the creativity, hard work, and dedication of individuals around the country working to address and prevent sexual violence. Winners are selected by their respective state, tribal, or territory anti-sexual violence coalitions and represent a wide range of individuals doing this critical work at the local level. Since joining the West Virginia's SAC in 2003, Dr. Haas has become increasingly involved in working with the state coalition on several research projects, providing statistics and technical assistance, and serving on three statewide committees facilitated by the coalition. The NSVRC provides resources and information on sexual violence to rape crisis centers, state, territory and tribal coalitions, allied organizations, agencies, educators, media and the general public.

## National News

*The information in this section is from the April issues of the NCJA Infoletter and NCJA Justice Bulletin.*

### **House Committee Examines Pros and Cons of Justice Reinvestment**

Amid recent reports that project high numbers of prison inmates returning to their communities within the next few years, Congress has focused several hearings on various solutions to the costs and concerns of prison overcrowding. Several hearings on prisoner reentry programs were held last month. The Commerce, Justice, and Science subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee also held a hearing on April 1 on the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a program designed to cut long-term spending and reduce overall prison populations. To learn more about Justice Reinvestment, visit

<http://justicereinvestment.org/resources>.

### **House Committee Meets to Explore the Effectiveness of Fusion Centers**

On April 1, the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment met to hear testimony about the effectiveness of fusion centers in deterring criminal and terrorist activity. The committee addressed a recent *Prevention Awareness Bulletin* published by the North Central Texas Fusion System ([http://www.privacylives.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/texasfusion\\_021909.pdf](http://www.privacylives.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/texasfusion_021909.pdf)) warning about the freedom radical Islamic groups have in the United States to advance their religious and political goals. During the hearing, committee members expressed their support for fusion centers but recognized the need for standardized procedures, as well as for more communication, accountability and transparency in order to increase overall effectiveness of fusion centers and to protect civil rights.

### **New Bill Moves to Tighten Prescription Drug Policies**

A new bill intended to crack down on unlawful distribution of the drug Dextromethorphan has passed the House just days after it was approved by the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health. The Dextromethorphan Distribution Act of 2009, or H.R. 1259, amends the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to prohibit the possession, distribution, or receipt of dextromethorphan by anyone who is not “registered, licensed, or approved” by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

## **Publications**

### **Report Examines Victimization of Specific Populations**

*Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Victims of Crime* (NCJ 225037, 8 pp.) presents findings about violent crime and property crime experienced by the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander population in the United States. Data on nonfatal violent victimization and nonfatal property victimization are drawn from the National Crime Victimization Survey. The report can be found at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/anhpivc.htm>.

### **New COPS Guide Spotlights Asset Forfeiture**

Asset forfeiture laws allow for the seizure (and eventual forfeiture) of property connected with criminal activity. *Asset Forfeiture* (NCJ 226323, 76 pp.) reviews the application of this response to specific crime problems, examines legal arrangements for its use, discusses benefits and consequences of its use, and provides recommendations for launching an asset forfeiture program. The guide is available at <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ResourceDetail.aspx?RID=509>.

### **Preventing Crime through Lighting Enhancements**

*Improving Street Lighting to Reduce Crime in Residential Areas* (NCJ 226359, 62 pp.) examines lighting improvements intended to decrease crime in public streets and alleys in residential neighborhoods. This guide also discusses factors to consider when upgrading or improving street lighting, and suggests measures for assessing the effectiveness of lighting solutions that have been implemented. The guide is available at <http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/ResourceDetail.aspx?RID=510>.

### **Black Inmate Population Declines for the First Time in Over 20 Years**

The number of black inmates incarcerated for drug offenses has decreased for the first time since the war on drugs began in 1986, according to a new report titled *The Changing Racial Dynamics of the War on Drugs*, released by the D.C.-based Sentencing Project. The report states that the number of black inmates incarcerated in state prisons for drug-related offenses has decreased by 21 percent from 145,000 in 1999 to 113,500 in 2005. During the same time frame, numbers for white imprisoned drug offenders have risen 42 percent from 50,000 to over 72,000. Rates for Latino inmates have remained essentially the same during this time, with a steady rate of about 51,000 inmates. According to the Sentencing Project, the

current numbers are a reflection of two possible factors: a shift by police to a more aggressive approach to combating methamphetamine (meth) use, most often used by white Americans, as well as an amplified reliance of judges and prosecutors on prison alternatives, such as drug courts. To view the Sentencing Project report, go to [http://sentencingproject.org/Admin/Documents/publications/dp\\_raceanddrugs.pdf](http://sentencingproject.org/Admin/Documents/publications/dp_raceanddrugs.pdf).

### **NIJ Report Identifies High-Priority Criminal Justice Technology Needs**

Last month, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) issued a report assessing the high-priority technological needs for state and local criminal justice systems. Dividing the needs into several categories, the report focused on technology that will improve public and officer safety, increase interoperability, ensure justice, and allow law enforcement to take a preemptive approach toward crime. To view the entire report, go to <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/225375.pdf>.

## **Conferences**

### **NADCP Holds Training Conference**

The National Association of Drug Court Professionals will hold its 15th Annual Training Conference in Anaheim, California, on June 10-13. The conference will feature 28 skill-building workshops and more than 140 individual sessions. In addition, on June 14<sup>th</sup>, the association will hold the first ever Mental Health Court/Co-Occurring Disorders Forum. For more information, go to [http://www.nadcp.org/conference\\_agenda2009.html](http://www.nadcp.org/conference_agenda2009.html).

### **Regional Workshops Offered on Managing the Mentally Ill in the Corrections System**

The Academy of Correctional Healthcare Professionals is offering three one-day regional workshops on *Managing the Mentally Ill through the Correctional System*. Combining the treatment of mental illness with comorbid physical disease is difficult. This program will move through the care continuum, suggesting solutions to issues specific to the mentally ill. Starting with initial screening, referral, and suicide prevention, nationally recognized correctional health care practitioners will guide participants through problem-solving exercises and provide examples for managing medications, risk, and behavioral issues specific to the mentally ill inmate-patient. The speakers also will facilitate discussion of these issues among program participants. The seminars are being offered in Fairfax, VA on Friday, May 15; Farmington, CT on Friday, June 19, and Bastrop, TX on Friday, July 31. For more information, go to <http://www.correctionalhealth.org/education/seminars/MHSeminar.html>.

## **Announcement**

### **SEARCH Uses Podcasts to Share Justice Information**

SEARCH announced that it is using podcasting as the newest medium for sharing peer-to-peer best practices, challenges, and successes from across the country. This podcast series on Justice Information Sharing - National Initiatives, Programs, Projects and Technologies will feature discussions and interviews among practitioners, industry experts, and government leaders regarding a variety of justice and public safety issues. The 2009 podcast series is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs' (OJP) Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The most recent podcast in the series directly addresses an issue that most, if not all, justice executives around the country are facing: how to maintain programs and initiatives through tough fiscal circumstances. Previous podcasts covered BJA's 2009 outlook/priorities, and understanding the Justice Reference Architecture. BJA and SEARCH plan to roll out a number of interviews and discussions in the coming months, on topics such as securing information exchanges and managing information sharing initiatives effectively. The podcasts are available at <http://www.search.org/programs/info/podcasts/>.