IMPLEMENTING A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

It is essential for probation to reach out to other justice and community stakeholders for support to ensure compliance with supervision conditions; to assess resources available for targeting risk and need areas that must be addressed to elicit behavior change; and, access information they can provide to judges enabling them to impose appropriate and sufficient supervision conditions. Because of the diversity that exists in the agencies and organizations available in each community, it is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of who could support probation’s efforts in supervising HCDD’s in every jurisdiction. However, the following section provides a list of potential agency partners and suggestions on ways in which you may collaborate:

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:** Besides serving as the arm of the justice system that is tasked with being the first responders to crime in our communities, law enforcement serves as the “on the street” eyes and ears of the justice system. They are the professionals that probation, parole, judges, and other justice professionals often rely on to keep them informed about individuals who are under probation supervision. Developing working relationships with law enforcement may benefit probation officers in supervising HCDD offenders in various ways. These include keeping probation officers apprised of new criminal activity, recidivism, contacts/arrests, address changes, so that swift, necessary responses can be taken.

**PROSECUTORS:** A good working relationship with prosecutors is important to the development of effective sentences for HCDD offenders and to the responses to violations of probation, as well as the response to successful compliance with probation of HCDD offenders. Probation agencies should ensure information is shared with prosecutors on the latest research on evidence-based practices that help promote effective outcomes for HCDD offenders. Furthermore, probation should actively engage prosecutors on a regular basis to review each agency’s policies, procedures and practices related to HCDD offenders.

**COURTS:** Judges are essential in reducing the occurrence of HCDD and can be one of the most crucial partners for probation. It is essential for probation officers to be able to exert swift and certain responses to non-compliance with supervision conditions, and having an established working relationship with the bench can facilitate non-compliant HCDD offenders being addressed expeditiously whether the case is handled through a judicial or administrative process. Probation administration should establish periodic discussions with the court on sentencing practices, violations and appropriate responses in order to maintain quality evidenced-based practices.
PARTNERS IN PREVENTION: The first step in developing prevention strategies is to identify and engage major stakeholders in the arena of justice prevention planning. These stakeholders typically include judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, community-based service programs, mental health services, and community leaders. In the realm of prevention, probation has not always been considered as a partner. However, as the one criminal justice agency who is often involved with the offender for the longest period during the life of a case from pre-trial determination through discharge from supervision, they employ the justice professionals who, based upon their extensive, first-hand working relationship with the HCDD offender, can offer ways of identifying key risk factors that can be addressed through prevention programming. In developing prevention programs for HCDD offenders, probation officers can offer prevention partners ideas regarding what motivates HCDD offenders to drink and drive, interventions that may keep these individuals from driving while intoxicated, and other valuable information that will help address this issue.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE ASSESSORS AND TREATMENT PROVIDERS: Substance abuse assessors and treatment providers play a crucial role in the planning for and intervention and supervision of HCDD offenders. Ideally, all HCDD offenders will receive a comprehensive alcohol/substance abuse assessment by a licensed or certified assessor. It is essential that the results of these assessments be shared with probation officers for inclusion in the development of pre-sentence reports as well as supervision and treatment plans; therefore, probation officers need to establish relationships with assessors and treatment providers in order for essential information to be gathered. This may include the development of information sharing protocols between the two agencies to be in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations. Additionally, many HCDD offenders will require treatment interventions (e.g. detoxification; individual, group, or family AOD counseling). The formation of working relationships with treatment providers will allow them to contribute to the development of measureable treatment goals, as well as provide an ally for the probation officer in monitoring compliance with supervision conditions.

BOOKING OFFICERS/JAIL/PRISON STAFF: Forming relationships with booking officers and jail/prison staff can prove to be invaluable for probation officers. Booking officers can provide probation officers with important screening/assessment information often collected during the jail/prison intake process. Additionally, jail/prison staff can provide anecdotal information to probation officers on the HCDD offenders’ demeanor, programming (if appropriate), and visitor/phone log information to inform the probation officer of potential networks of support (e.g. family, friends).
FAMILIES AND INFORMAL NETWORKS OF SOCIAL SUPPORTS: An HCDD offender’s family is potentially an invaluable source of information and support. The Family Support Approach developed by Family Justice touts the importance of engaging families and networks of informal social support as essential in improving outcomes for criminal offenders (Family Justice, n.d.). These networks of support can be leveraged to assist the HCDD offender in meeting their supervision and treatment goals, as well as to provide information to the probation officer when the offender is not complying with his or her supervision requirements.

TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS: Probation administrators and officers need to develop relationships with agencies providing their chosen technologies (e.g., remote alcohol monitoring devices, ignition interlock, electronic monitoring or reporting equipment, alcohol or drug testing mechanisms). Probation needs to be aware of what supervision technologies are available, the benefits/barriers to their use in the particular jurisdiction, and training required to use the technology and analyze the reports.

COURT ADMINISTRATORS: Probation officers are often charged with ensuring that offenders pay fines, restitution, court fees, etc. In jurisdictions where fines, restitution, and court fees are paid directly to the court, probation officers should establish a good working relationship with court administrators to track the timely payment of these monies to ensure compliance with supervision conditions. In instances where an HCDD offender is behind on the payment of these monies, a good working relationship will increase the likelihood that a court administrator will alert the probation officer so a swift response can be imposed. Additionally, developing working relationships with court administrators will also serve to increase the likelihood that requests for court action (e.g. violation or revocation) be processed and added to the court docket in a timely manner. Shared information systems may provide a more efficient procedure for accomplishing this process by creating automatic alerts when payments are made.

POLICY MAKERS: The state legislature and county commissioners are important allies to have in addressing hardcore drunk driving issues. Probation is in a unique position to inform the legislature and county board on trends, successful and unsuccessful policies and strategies, and reforms and policies needed to adequately supervise HCDD offenders.

DWI/DUI COURTS: Probation officers with HCDD offenders on their caseloads may be asked to coordinate with local DWI/DUI courts.

RELEASING AUTHORITIES: For reentry purposes, forming relationships with releasing authorities can assist parole officers in developing more effective supervision and treatment plans. Likewise, releasing authorities can share information with parole officers regarding past and current assessment information, treatment and programming interventions, and other vital information to ensuring successful reentry back into the community.