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RESEARCHERS INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MONTANA'S EARLY RELEASE PROGRAM

TALLAHASSEE, FLA—In a recent study published in *Criminology & Public Policy* (CPP) [Volume 10, Issue 4], researchers found that offenders who are released early from prison without parole supervision are more likely to recidivate than those who are released with parole supervision. The authors examined the recidivism rates of a group of offenders in Montana who were released early from prison with a comparable group of offenders who were subject to release under traditional parole supervision. Professors Kevin A. Wright, of Arizona State University, and Jeffrey W. Rosky, of the University of Central Florida believe that offenders who are released early from prison are more likely to recidivate because they are not adequately prepared for reentry back into the community. In Montana, offenders who are released from prison on traditional parole supervision are required to have a detailed parole plan that includes housing and employment. The authors' findings indicate that a smoother transition back into society is essential for successful reentry.

The authors argue that given current pressures on correctional systems to reduce their budgets, it is unwise to completely do away with early release procedures. However, attention should be paid to the transition period between prison and reentry into the community. Additionally, the authors recommend for a system of graduated sanctions for technical violations. They believe it may help to reduce the correctional costs associated with reincarcerating offenders who receive technical violations.

Senior Editor for this segment, Beth Huebner, of the University of Missouri, St. Louis, highlights the likelihood that correctional systems across the country will have to begin employing some form of early release programs because of severe overcrowding and budget deficits. Echoing the authors, Huebner focuses upon the importance of inmate-centered release decisions with intensive planning and programming. Policy essayista, Faye Taxman, of George Mason University, and Susan Turner, of the University of California, Irvine, both argue that correctional practitioners should look beyond the basic risk-assessment model of release and focus more on a client-centered approach, like the healthcare field. Policy essayist, Megan Kurlychek of the University at Albany, SUNY, urges policymakers and practitioners to seek programs that better prepare the offender for reentry.