

*oppaga*

# Interim Status Report

December 1999

Report No. 99-17

## Corrections' Reorganization Goals Are Sound, But the Implementation Could Be Improved

### *at a glance*

1999 legislation authorized Secretary Michael Moore to reorganize the Department of Corrections within general parameters.

- While it is too early to tell how successful the reorganization will be, the changes are intended to reduce costs, standardize statewide operations, increase efficiency, and re-focus staff on the mission of public safety.

To enhance the potential for successful reorganization, the Secretary should

- improve efforts to communicate with stakeholders about major decisions and reorganization processes;
- ensure that critical operations are not disrupted; and
- balance centralized control with site-based decision making.

The Secretary should also structure next year's performance-based program budget to reflect reorganization.

### Purpose of Review ———

Chapter 99-271, Laws of Florida, directs OPPAGA to conduct a performance review of the Department of Corrections' reorganization and produce a report by December 31, 2000. This information brief provides an interim report on the department's progress prior to the 2000 legislative session.

### Background ———

The Department of Corrections is one of Florida's largest state agencies and employs over 25,000 staff to run 55 prisons and more than 150 probation and parole offices. After being appointed the new secretary of the department in January 1999, Michael Moore quickly concluded that the department was organized inefficiently and that its policies and practices were inconsistent. With Ch. 99-271, Laws of Florida, the Legislature authorized Secretary Moore to reorganize the Department of Corrections within general parameters to address these concerns.

This interim report describes the department's primary reorganization initiatives to date and identifies issues the Secretary should address.

## Department Initiatives —

The Department of Corrections' reorganization will shift the agency from a decentralized to a centralized organizational model. The goals of this reorganization are to standardize and consolidate operations across the state, increase efficiency, reduce costs, and re-focus on the mission of public safety.

Prior to reorganization, operational decisions and policy interpretation were generally made at the prison and regional levels. This will change under reorganization, as decisions are standardized and operations are consolidated. The secretary plans to develop standardized statewide policies for areas such as employee discipline, visitation, canteen operations, equipment, and vehicles. In addition, operations such as inmate banking, substance abuse treatment, the court-ordered payment system, and warehousing/distribution will be consolidated to increase efficiencies and reduce workload duplication.

While the department's reorganization effort affects most department functions, we identified five primary components of reorganization:

- reconfiguring operational regions and the central office;
- establishing service centers to centralize business, personnel, and other support functions;
- realigning staff;
- redefining specific prison missions and the populations assigned to those prisons; and
- consolidating accounting.

### *Reconfiguring regions and the central office*

Secretary Moore has reconfigured program regions and reduced the number of assistant secretaries and central office bureaus. This change revises the chain of command structure to provide more direct control from the central office.

Prior to reorganization, the department had five regions, each headed by a regional director who was responsible for overseeing prison and community corrections operations within the region. The Secretary has reduced the number of regions from five to four and appointed separate regional directors for prison operations and community corrections in each region.<sup>1</sup> Now the department has eight rather than five regional directors.

He has also reduced the number of central office assistant secretaries from six to five. The Office of Executive Services was eliminated and its duties, including personnel and staff development, were placed in the Office of Administration. As a result of reconfiguring the central office divisions, seven positions were eliminated.

### *Centralizing business and personnel functions*

The Secretary created seven service centers to replace the business and personnel offices at the regional offices and prisons. Before the service centers were established, the five regional offices provided business and personnel support to the community correction centers and probation and parole offices, while each of the 55 major prisons had an autonomous business and personnel office. Centralized business and personnel activities are intended to foster consistency

---

<sup>1</sup> Because the new regions were drawn based on workload, the prison and community corrections regions do not cover the same geographic area. Collectively, the regions do cover the state.

with department staff, vendors, and inmates. The seven new service centers now administer general services, accounting and banking, personnel, computer services, maintenance and renovations, food service, and training.

According to the department, there were 2,129 support positions prior to the reorganization, but only 1,842 positions are needed to staff the service centers.<sup>2</sup> The department anticipates that this reduction of 287 positions will yield recurring annual savings of approximately \$10 million. The department must achieve these savings over time through attrition because Ch. 99-271, Laws of Florida, specifies that no employee shall be required to change job locations or incur a salary reduction as a result of reorganization. Therefore, all staff formerly in business and personnel positions have had to choose between applying for a service center position or moving into a vacant position at their current location or elsewhere in the system. (See Exhibit 1.) As of December 1, 1999, 137 employees have elected to remain at their current location and await a vacant position.

**Exhibit 1  
Staff Are Moving to the Service Centers**

	Number of Staff		Total
	Moved to a Service Center	Filling Other Vacancies	
Promotions	494	11	505
Demotions	17	66	83
Reassignments	1,072	28	1,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,583</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1,688</b>

Source: Department of Corrections as of December 1, 1999.

Based on geographical area, number of facilities and offices requiring support, and the number of staff and inmates, the department located the service centers in

<sup>2</sup>Support positions include business, personnel, food services, staff development, information technology, and maintenance.

Marianna, Tallahassee, Lake City, Gainesville, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, and Tampa. The areas each center serves do not conform to the boundaries of the institutional and community corrections regions.

***Realigning staff***

Secretary Moore is redefining the responsibilities of several positions to increase the focus on security. Now that business and personnel activities have been transferred out of the prisons, wardens are expected to concentrate their attention and efforts on security and prison operations. He has also placed an emphasis on using certified officers for security functions rather than support tasks. For example, approximately 67 certified officers that were previously assigned to mailroom duties will be reassigned to security responsibilities and replaced with non-certified clerical staff.

In addition, to put more officers into community corrections field offices and enhance standardization, the department is revising the classification system and changing the way it makes inmate classification decisions. The caseload of inmate classification officers was increased from 150:1 to 225:1, freeing approximately 110 positions to be transferred to community corrections to assist in reducing supervision caseloads. The department also discontinued the certification requirement for prison classification officers. The department and the Florida Police Benevolent Association (representing correctional probation officers) are in discussions regarding the various placement options available to the approximately 633 officers and supervisors assigned to prison classification. Currently, the three options are: remaining in a limited number of certified positions at reception centers, accepting a reclassification to an institutional classification position that does

## Interim Status Report

not require certification, or transferring to community corrections to serve as a probation officer.

Non-certified staff will replace certified classification officers. They will compile information and make classification recommendations to an institutional classification committee. The committee, composed of the classification supervisor, the prison warden or assistant warden, and the chief correctional officer will be responsible for making classification decisions. To increase consistency, each prison committee will work in conjunction with a state classification committee. The department is developing policies and procedures for these committees and defining what decisions must be approved by the state committee.

### *Redefining prison missions and populations*

The department is redefining the missions of several institutions to narrow their scope and/or serve a different population. The mission of Zephyrhills Correctional Institution is being revised to accommodate the more severe cases within the mental health population formerly housed at the Correctional Mental Health Institution, (CMHI) which was closed. Department staff are also revisiting the mission of Union Correctional Institution, which houses death row and the most difficult to manage inmates. Union's population is being changed to encompass a broader mix of inmates, including some that have skills to assist with construction and renovation at the prison.

Several prisons, including Dade, Hernando, Hendry, and Jefferson, are being reconfigured to serve a different population. (See Exhibit 2.) For example, the populations at Jefferson, Dade, and Hernando were changed to provide additional female offender beds in central

and south Florida. These changes were intended to enhance contact between female offenders and their families.

In addition, several institutional missions are being redefined to provide more efficient, less costly inmate health care. Based on the health care consolidation plan, prisons will be designated one of four levels to indicate what type of inmate can be housed. For example, level one prisons will house generally healthy inmates and have minimal medical staff, while level four prisons will house inmates with complex health problems and have a much larger standard medical staff.

### Exhibit 2 Some Prison Populations Are Changing

Prisons	Change	
	From	To
Dade	Male youthful offender	Female adult offender
Hendry	Male adult offender	Male youthful offender
Hernando	Male adult offender	Female youthful offender
Jefferson	Female adult offender	Male adult offender
Correctional Mental Health Institution at River Junction	Male adult offender	Closed

Source: Department of Corrections project status list.

### *Consolidating accounting*

The department is simplifying its budget by consolidating disbursement accounts that were previously maintained for every institution and probation and parole facility. As a result, over 3,000 disbursement accounts will be reduced to approximately 1,000 accounts. According to department administrators, no accounting information will be lost, as expense information will be maintained for every department facility at the service center serving that area. The primary result of this consolidation will be

the simplification and streamlining of accounting at the service centers.

The department is also consolidating inmate banking. Prior to reorganization, each prison maintained inmate monies at a local bank. When an inmate transferred to another prison, funds had to be forwarded to the bank used by the next prison, which created a great deal of work for institutional business staff. Under reorganization, all inmate funds will be centralized in a single account, thereby reducing the workload of service center business staff and increasing operational efficiency.

## Issues of Potential Concern

---

Our interim review identified four issues of concern.

- The Secretary's approach to reorganization has not given stakeholders sufficient information about the vision of change. Therefore, the department is experiencing a high level of resistance to and questioning of departmental changes.
- The Secretary needs to ensure that the temporary delays and confusion of reorganization do not disrupt critical operations.
- To avoid bottlenecks and inefficiencies, the Secretary needs to balance centralized control with site-based decision making.
- The Secretary will need to revise the department's performance-based program budget to reflect changes made as a result of reorganization.

### *Sharing the vision of reorganization*

The Secretary has identified general reorganization goals and has established a project status report describing current reorganization initiatives. This report

includes a task breakdown and associated timelines for some initiatives, but not all. The report changes as new initiatives are added and those deemed complete are deleted. Department managers have also issued summary reports of portions of reorganization, such as the service centers, either during or after changes have been initiated. These summary reports have not been widely distributed to staff. Neither the project status report nor the summary plans constitute a comprehensive plan because they do not outline the scope of changes, their interrelationships, and related timelines. The lack of a clear plan creates a high need for communication from department administrators to a variety of stakeholders, including department employees, the Legislature, and the correctional officers' union.

To date, the Secretary has not provided a systematic, reliable way for reorganization information to be fully and quickly disseminated to stakeholders. This has placed stakeholders in a position of uncertainty and confusion. As a result, department management has often found itself in a defensive posture, repeatedly responding to inquiries, dispelling rumors, and defending reorganization decisions.

The department needs to make a concerted, organized effort to communicate the status of change within the organization. As standardization and consolidation initiatives progress, employees and other stakeholders should be informed of major decisions and processes. When feasible, department administrators should discuss anticipated changes with the Legislature and the union before final decisions are implemented. Better communication should result in more cooperation from stakeholders and allow them to contribute to improving operations and efficiencies.

Because of the large number of new initiatives and the fact that implementation

## *Interim Status Report*

is occurring from the top down, some initiatives may not achieve the desired results. Therefore, it is important that the department designate time and staff to assess whether initiatives are completed and achieving their intended purpose. The department should maintain a list of completed initiatives, what defines completion, and the intended result. This information can then be used to evaluate the outcome(s) and identify any needed improvements.

### *Ensuring that critical operations continue*

The Secretary needs to ensure that the temporary delays and confusion of reorganization do not disrupt critical operations, such as health care and vendor payments. Although some delays can be expected during this transition, major disruptions could lead to costly litigation, vendor withdrawal, or increased inmate grievances. Continuation of these operations has not been addressed in the project status report or summary reports.

For prisons to operate, a variety of core services must be maintained. Some processes, such as inmate health care, access to a law library, the inmate grievance process, and the receipt of inmate mail are mandated by state and/or federal law. Other services, though not mandated, are critical to the operation of prisons. For example, contract vendors provide utilities, food, cleaning supplies and staff and inmate uniforms. If vendor payments are not processed in a timely manner, provision of these services could be compromised.

To avoid the potential for litigation and lapses in critical services, the department should identify and monitor core operations and related requirements to ensure that they are met. If these requirements are not met, the department could find itself responding to reorganization problems long

after the reorganization has been completed.

### *Balancing centralized control with site-based decision making*

Ideally, department operations should provide the flexibility and authority for problems to be solved at the lowest possible level, within a framework of consistent, standardized policies and procedures. While centralization is expected to increase efficiencies and economies of scale, field staff must retain a certain amount of flexibility and authority to function effectively in the organization.

Prior to reorganization, wardens controlled the entire prison compound, including all personnel and purchasing decisions. This decentralized model provided a point of accountability and facilitated quick response, but the breadth of institutional autonomy resulted in inconsistencies from prison to prison.

Under the new centralized model, wardens will control only security and classification staff and may or may not be aware of purchases or decisions made outside these areas. Institutional operations such as programs, food service, and health services report to service center, regional, or central office administrators and purchasing is handled within each of these areas. To avoid fragmentation among facility operational units, it is important to strike a balance between centralized operations and site-based decision making. If on-site administrators have to wait for central office to make decisions, define policy, or process transactions, bottlenecks could occur and operations could be paralyzed.

Inmate population differences such as gender, custody level, and medical and psychological grades dictate that there be some operational flexibility. Wardens must be given flexibility within the scope of

standardized policies and procedures if the department is to successfully ensure the safety of staff, inmates, and the public.

### *Realigning the performance-based program budget (PB<sup>2</sup>)*

Reorganization has been conducted independently from the department's previous work on PB<sup>2</sup>. As a result, the department needs to ensure that its budget programs and performance measures reflect reorganization. The legislative budget request the agency makes in September 2000 for Fiscal Year 2001-02 should reflect these changes.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

While it is too early to tell how successful the department's reorganization efforts will be, the changes are intended to enhance the standardization of statewide operations, increase efficiency, reduce costs, and refocus staff on the mission of public safety. To avoid the potential for litigation, vendor withdrawal, and increased inmate grievances, the department needs to ensure that critical operations are not disrupted during the transition of reorganization. Also, the Secretary needs to balance centralized control with site-based decision making so that local administrators are not paralyzed by bottlenecks and delays. Increased communication between department managers and stakeholders would improve the reorganization process and enhance the potential for success.

*OPPAGA's final report on Department of Corrections reorganization is due December 31, 2000.*

## Department of Corrections' Response

The primary goals of reorganization are to increase standardization and consistency of operations; to promote efficiency; and to refocus our efforts on the primary mission of the department, that is public safety. Nothing is being done for the sake of change; everything is tied to providing better service and a better product for all stakeholders.

I am well aware that any reorganization, particularly one so all encompassing and involving such a large agency, will engender a level of anxiety and discomfort among staff and other stakeholders. Communication from top to bottom is essential to making it work and I have attempted to address this through various avenues: weekly department head meetings; monthly regional director meetings; a number of statewide administrator meetings; and, personal site visits by the directors and myself. The "high level of resistance," quoted in the report is more anecdotal than factually based, but I fully agree that every effort needs to be made to ensure understanding among all stakeholders. To this end, the department is developing a communications plan in an effort to provide all stakeholders an even clearer picture of what we are doing and why it is being done.

One of the first things I put into place upon becoming Secretary was a Project Tracking List so that goals are set, timelines are provided, and project status and completion can be measured. The majority of the department's reorganization efforts are included in this tracking system, which has recently been modified to make it easier to follow and be a more concise, less detailed document so as to be beneficial to all stakeholders.

## *Interim Status Report*

OPPAGA's report cautions against allowing reorganization to disrupt critical operations. There is no indication this has or will happen. Reorganization is designed to enhance the support of the agency's critical functions and the uninterrupted provision of basic services (security, health care, food services, etc.) is still our first priority. Through the establishment of the Emergency Action Center, DC Mail, and other communication tools, operations are monitored on a daily basis.

In the area of timely vendor payments, the department has a well-established system for monitoring compliance with the state's prompt payment laws. Although compliance rates did decrease during the first quarter of FY 1999-2000, due to the physical relocation of administrative officers and/or workload, recent reports have indicated a leveling of compliance rates at/or above the standard established by the State Comptroller. Monitoring of prompt payment reports will continue to be a primary management tool in evaluating operational efficiency through the reorganization effort.

The goal of centralizing many of the previous decentralized functions was to provide for standardization and consistency. By developing standardized procedures, wardens and circuit administrators are given the parameters in which to operate, enabling them to make decisions within those parameters on a consistent basis. Centralizing support functions via the Service Centers provided greater efficiency (\$10 million savings) as well as ensured a consistent way of doing business throughout the state. It also allows the wardens and circuit administrators to concentrate on their primary mission and let the support services be handled by others.

By providing clear and consistent procedures along with utilizing advanced technology and communication systems, Bottlenecks should be kept to a minimum.

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your interim report. Your staff has been very cooperative and eager to get involved in the intricacies of what we are trying to accomplish. This process has been mutually beneficial and I look forward to continuing to work with OPPAGA on this very important endeavor.

/s/Michael Moore, Secretary  
Florida Department of Corrections

OPPAGA provides objective, independent, professional analyses of state policies and services to assist the Florida Legislature in decision making, to ensure government accountability, and to recommend the best use of public resources. This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by telephone (850/488-0021 or 800/531-2477), by FAX (850/487-3804), in person, or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-1475).

***The Florida Monitor:*** <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/>

Project supervised by Byron Brown (850/487-9215)

Project conducted by Sabrina Hartley (850/487-9232)