

## **MAINE PRETRIAL SERVICES (MPS) IS FIRST IN NATION TO ACHIEVE PRETRIAL SERVICE ACCREDITATION**

**APRIL 10, 2013**

PORTLAND, Maine --- The National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA) announced today that, after a rigorous, two-year process, the Maine Pretrial Services (MPS) is the first pretrial services program in the country to achieve NAPSA accreditation.

In a statement from John Clark, pretrial expert and co-chair of the NAPSA Accreditation Committee, "The National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA), the professional association of pretrial services practitioners nationwide, has established a set of comprehensive standards that pretrial services programs must meet to be certified by the Association as an accredited program. The accreditation standards are based on legal and evidence-based practices in pretrial services. To be accredited, a pretrial services program must demonstrate that it provides the jurisdictions it serves a full range of pretrial services, and at a high level. After a rigorous process, the Association is pleased to announce that Maine Pretrial Services is the first pretrial services program in the country to achieve NAPSA accreditation."

MPS is a 501 (c) 3 organization with roots in criminal justice and community corrections. MPS provides an array of services to Maine counties, including pre-arraignment screening and risk assessment, release and supervision, community confinement monitoring, and reentry services, as well as intensive case management for all of Maine's problem solving courts (Adult Drug Treatment Courts, Family Treatment Drug Courts, and Maine's only Co-Occurring Disorders and Veterans' Court).

MPS increases fairness and access to justice by reducing the number of people who are held in jail before trial who pose no threat to the community; by providing meaningful supervision to help keep communities safe; and by increasing the number of people who are diverted from the criminal justice system to services such as mental health or substance abuse treatment.

The accreditation standards are based on legal and evidence-based practices in pretrial services. To be accredited, a pretrial services program must demonstrate that it provides its criminal justice community a full range of pretrial services, and at a high level as determined by NAPSA, the professional association of pretrial services practitioners nationwide.

"For more than 35 years, Maine Pretrial Services has been at the forefront of providing community-based criminal justice case management and supervision to a population with a spectrum of needs, so we are honored to be the first agency in the country to achieve this important milestone," said Elizabeth Simoni, Executive Director, MPS. "Maine benefits from a multi-faceted program that supports the criminal justice system through providing fair and equitable treatment to those who are criminal justice-involved."

Maine Pretrial Services' Deputy Director, Shawn LaGrega, played a key role in the accreditation process. Working closely with NAPSA officials, Mr. LaGrega demonstrated MPS' adherence to the NAPSA standards for effective and fair pretrial services. These standards are echoed in the American Bar Associations' standards for pretrial detention and release.

MPS partners with criminal justice stakeholders to design and implement cost saving, evidence based programming for correctional facilities. Sheriff Randall Liberty of Kennebec County stated: "The Kennebec County Sheriff's Office has greatly benefited from the professionalism, dedication and long-term vision of Maine Pretrial Services. MPS has been a key stake holder in

the success of the Criminogenic Addiction Recovery Academy, the Veterans Block and Court and with advocacy for the mentally ill. MPS provides remarkable expertise and brings unquestioned credibility in all that they do."

During a time of notable jail crowding in Maine, MPS reports weekly to the Maine Board of Corrections as to its efforts to reduce pretrial detention in Maine jails. Mark Westrum, Chair of the Maine State Board of Corrections stated, "Maine Pretrial Services' recent NAPSA accreditation is precisely the step forward our state Board of Corrections has been seeking in the area of pretrial release and supervision. As a state correctional system, we need to demand evidence based interventions, and this aligns well with the Board of Corrections' goals in community criminal justice programming. I commend them for their commitment to excellence!"