

Presidential Statement
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I hope you made time in your busy summer schedule to join us in Kansas City, Mo., for the American Correctional Association's 137th Congress of Correction. The congress was a wonderful forum in which we discussed issues important to the corrections field. Serving as president of ACA for the past year, I have had the opportunity to travel to several states and functions and see ACA members and other corrections professionals at their best. Through my experiences, I have determined several initiatives that I feel deserve our attention at this time. A few of the ideas I wish to focus on during the remainder of my term are discussed below.

Membership

Like many large organizations, in the past several years, we have experienced a leveling off of our member numbers. This may be because younger generations are less inclined to become members of associations and organizations. Since we cannot change this generational phenomena, we must reach out to new members from a relatable perspective that takes into account people's current needs and goals.

To approach the problem, we must understand that increasing membership is not about increasing revenue. In fact, ACA membership dues account for just a small percentage of ACA's revenue. I would prefer to approach membership from the perspective of expanding our community of professionals who are some of the greatest assets to the corrections profession and the key players in changing offender behavior. ACA provides many opportunities for professional and educational growth through its conference workshops, training seminars and certification programs. I think your involvement in ACA helps you network with other professionals across the country, as well as keep in touch with state-of-the-art programs and solutions.

Core Jail Standards

As you know, there are more than 3,000 jails throughout the country, of all sizes and descriptions. Only 150 of those are accredited by ACA. In my opinion, those not accredited choose not to engage in the process because it seems out of their reach, both financially and operationally. The standards were not designed for jails with very limited resources or populations, and as a result, there is little involvement.

In response, I have asked the chairman of the Standards Committee to look at developing a set of core standards for jails with populations of less than 500 that would be achievable by some of the jails that currently are not engaged. The Standards Committee met in April, and its members believe that all jails across the country will be able to achieve the proposed standards and receive accreditation.

Those jails that are accredited by ACA, or are at least pursuing the standards, provide a safer and more productive environment for offenders and staff. Merely thinking it is possible to achieve accreditation, and working to that end, puts jail staff in a more progressive and enlightened manner of business.

Health Care

A committee met at the ACA office in April to continue the development of the performance-based standards for correctional health care. The draft standards produced at this meeting will lead to a safer and more effective correctional health care system. In addition, performance-based standards for juvenile health care are being reviewed. At the 2007 Winter Conference, ACA launched its Healthcare Professional Interest Section (H-PIS) and provided many sessions, training, certification exams and other health care focused events. ACA and I continued to support H-PIS at the 137th Congress of Correction in Kansas City. The creation of this correctional health care group has already led to an increase in association membership and more conference participation by correctional health care professionals. With this focus on health care, I have also created a new committee to research pandemics and develop response strategies suited to the correctional setting.

Probation and Parole Standards

In order to keep our standards current, I have appointed a committee to look at the adult probation and parole field services standards. The appointed committee will soon be meeting and subsequently should be making a report to the Standards Committee at the 2008 Winter Conference in Grapevine, Texas.

During the next year of my term, other new initiatives will arise in response to correctional advancements and needs. I ask that you share with me your ideas and aspirations for our association. ACA has meant a lot to me in the past 33 years, and I feel a strong obligation to give back to its members during my tenure as president.