



CCA Offers Effective Programs to Help Offenders Overcome Addictions

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--May 17, 2005--Twenty years ago, prison psychologist Dr. Don Murray and offender and drug addict Ray Choate were on opposite sides of the fence when they met at a federal prison in Seagoville, Texas.

A few months ago, the two men were reunited. Murray had just been hired by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the nation's largest corrections management company, as Director of Addictions Treatment and Behavioral Programs and was touring CCA prisons and jails across the country to meet with program managers. At CCA's owned and operated Cimarron Correctional Facility in Cushing, Oklahoma, Murray ran into Choate. Choate was not an offender at Cimarron--rather, he was overseeing the facility's addictions treatment program.

Today, the two men are working side by side to develop and implement addictions treatment and behavioral programs to help offenders overcome their addictions and lead productive lives.

Three major residential programs CCA offers to the federal, state and local offenders in its care include: Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP), Strategies for Change, and Lifeline. Each is voluntary, and offenders choose to enter a "community" within their correctional facility where everyone shares a common goal of breaking their addictions. The offenders eat, sleep and participate in therapy and curriculum together. These therapeutic communities are currently being offered at nearly one-third of CCA's more than 60 facilities. There are currently more than 2,500 offenders on any given day at CCA facilities nationwide who are participating in these CCA intensive, residential addictions treatment and behavioral programs, and that number is growing every day. These numbers are in addition to the thousands of other individuals under CCA management who are participating in CCA's group treatment programs for substance abuse at other CCA facilities but who may not require the same intensive level of substance abuse treatment.

"CCA places an intensive focus on research- and evidence-based therapeutic programs that are proven to work," said Murray. "About 70 to 80 percent of our offenders have a history of substance abuse or dependence, many with co-existing psychological disorders. Once they've completed their initial detoxification and are no longer physically addicted, it's imperative that we work with them to change their thinking patterns so that they are no longer psychologically addicted."

"Many of the individuals we treat come from unstable, unhealthy and abusive family environments. In an effort to escape the emotional pain and stress they are experiencing, they often turn to drugs or alcohol," Murray added. "Some move quickly into a 'downward spiral' where nothing else matters in their lives -- not their jobs, their families, their spouses, their children -- not even the law. Once addicted offenders end up in one of our facilities, it is our responsibility to help them find new ways to cope with problems and prepare for a new life in the community which does not include drugs or alcohol."

Choate is using lessons he learned from his past to help the 118 inmates enrolled in Cimarron's Lifeline program, an intensive six to 12 month therapeutic community which helps inmates develop moral responsibility and positive, lasting relationships.

"I tell the men in my program, I know the fear. I know the anger," said Choate. "I've been where you are, and I'm not going back down that road. I'm offering my hand to bring you up."

This year, CCA will be implementing RDAP, an award-winning drug treatment initiative that has an established track record in achieving favorable outcomes with drug-involved offenders. The success of this program is exemplified by a 16 to 18 percent reduction in recidivism even for offenders who have been released from prison for three years. The program is typically nine months long and includes 500 hours of highly structured cognitive-behavioral curriculum aimed at helping individuals change their thinking patterns.

For more information on an addictions treatment and behavioral program or to tour a CCA facility, call Dr. Don Murray at (800) 624-2931, ext. 3112.

CCA is the nation's largest owner and operator of privatized correctional and detention facilities and one of the largest prison operators in the United States, behind only the federal government and four states. The company operates more than 60 facilities, including 39 company-owned facilities, with a total design capacity of approximately 70,000 beds in 19 states and the District of Columbia.

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