

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission

Our mission is to sustain and enhance the coordination, cohesiveness, productivity and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Arizona.



Views and News

Successful 2014 Legislative Session Sees ACJC's NICS Improvement Bill Signed by Governor Brewer

The Arizona Criminal Justice Commission had one main legislative priority for the 2014 legislative session. Working with the legislative liaisons from various criminal justice stakeholder groups, ACJC worked with House Public Safety, Military & Regulatory Affairs Chairman Representative Justin Pierce to introduce HB 2322, the NICS Improvement Act.

Part of ACJC's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Record Improvement plan as developed by the NICS Task Force is the recommendation to seek changes in Arizona statute to increase the reporting of mental health rulings into the NICS system. Draft legislation was adopted by the Commission at their meeting in November 2013 and ACJC began conducting stakeholder meetings with members of the legislature and other interested groups early in 2014.

The initial draft of HB 2322, as approved by the Commission, contained several new classes of mental health rulings to be reported from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to the Arizona Department of Public Safety (DPS) who reports the ruling information into the NICS system. In addition the draft contained a mechanism for an indicator alert for Arizona law enforcement officers as well as a change in the definition of prohibited possessor within statute to cover those individuals covered by the new language.

Through meetings with legislators and stakeholder groups, including the National Rifle Association and Arizona Citizens Defense League, concerns were raised regarding the expansion in the definition of prohibited possessor and access by law enforcement to the indicator alert.

With input from Commission members, ACJC ultimately worked to draft compromise language that creates an automatic transmission of mental health rulings pursuant to Rule 11, Title 13, guilty except insane, and the appointment of a guardian unless solely due to physical incapacity into and out of the NICS system.

On June 15 the Arizona Republic ran an oped discussing how the bill took an important step in keeping weapons out of the hands of the seriously mental ill: <http://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/2014/06/15/mental-health-gun-violence/10563097/>.



ACJC Commissioners, staff and stakeholders join HB 2322 sponsor Chairman Justin Pierce as Governor Jan Brewer Signed the bill into law

ACJC will be working over the interim with stakeholder groups to address their concerns and draft legislation to implement the indicator alert for Arizona law enforcement officers.

You can review ACJC's 2014 Legislative Summary here: <http://www.azcjc.gov/ACJC.Web/pubs/ACJC%202014%20Legislative%20Summary.pdf>

Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Initiative Sees Early Success

In 2012, ACJC, in partnership with the Arizona Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families, the Arizona Board of Pharmacy, Arizona HIDTA, Arizona Department of Health Services, and Arizona-based prevention organizations developed and implemented the Arizona Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Initiative.

A hallmark of Arizona's approach is local implementation of the strategies by community-based substance abuse coalitions and the leveraging of existing resources found among local, county, and state entities to support the initiative. This approach focuses on maximizing existing resources and the strategic infusion of additional resources to support emerging community needs.

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Revolutionary DNA Instruments Now Available to Department of Public Safety Detectives

Instruments will allow detectives to quickly identify investigative leads from DNA samples

The DPS Crime Laboratory System recently completed the validation process of its new Rapid DNA instruments, and the revolutionary new tools are now available to some DPS detectives for use during law enforcement investigations.

In April, several DPS detectives completed a Rapid DNA operator's course which qualifies them to process single source samples such as blood and saliva utilizing the newly validated instruments. It was the first course of its kind in the U.S.

The newly trained DPS detectives are now able to place samples in the Rapid DNA instruments and receive DNA profiles in as little as 90 minutes.

Vince Figarelli, the Crime Laboratory Superintendent at DPS, said, "DPS detectives who are trained to use these instruments will now be able to quickly identify investigative leads from samples left behind at a crime scene, even when a suspect is not in custody or identified."



Figarelli added, "the biggest and most novel development offered by this new system is the ability to search Arizona Arrestee and Convicted Offender DNA profiles, potentially identifying investigative leads."

The results of a detective's DNA profile search could provide probable cause for an arrest or search warrant. If the case goes to court, an analysis would then have to be completed by a criminalist.

A DPS detective with the Vehicular Crimes Unit (VCU) has already utilized the Rapid DNA process to identify a suspect. The detective processed a blood sample found within a vehicle and analyzed it by utilizing the Rapid DNA instrument.

The detective compared that blood sample to a known standard collected from the suspect. A usable DNA profile was obtained from both samples and the DNA profiles matched, confirming the origin of the blood sample.

More classes are upcoming for interested law enforcement agencies statewide. Several more of the instruments will be purchased and placed at DPS locations throughout the state.

2014 ACJC Criminal Justice Directory Now Available

ACJC staff have completed their work updating the contact information for the roughly 500 law enforcement agencies across Arizona. You can download a copy or access a searchable version by visiting ACJC's web page at: http://www.azcjc.gov/ACJC.Web/directory/cj_directory.aspx

ACJC Chairman's Message - Bill Montgomery, Maricopa County Attorney



I am honored and proud to serve as Chairman of ACJC, particularly at a time when our mission is especially critical to the effective pursuit of justice in Arizona.

The growth of our criminal justice system parallels the growth of our state, making the need for coordination, cohesiveness and productivity more important than ever before. But the goal remains the same, namely, to reliably and efficiently provide public safety for the citizens we serve.

In Maricopa County, meeting this goal has meant reorganizing resources to address changing crime trends and developing

new approaches to specific offenses like domestic violence strangulation, sex crimes, and drug offenses. We are also implementing new tools to better track our workloads and outcomes to ensure we are targeting the most dangerous criminals and repeat offenders in our jurisdiction.

As fellow law enforcement professionals, there is much we can learn from each other and I look forward to sharing best practices and working cooperatively with you to achieve success in meeting the responsibilities our citizens have entrusted us with.

Together we can continue to build on the achievements ACJC has accomplished and raise the bar for the next generation of colleagues who join us in the noble pursuit of justice for all.

ACJC Updates

Drug, Gang & Violent Crime Control Program

At its May 2014 meeting, the Commission awarded \$10.3 million in state, federal, and local match grant funds to various criminal justice agencies under the Drug, Gang, and Violent Crime Control Program. The purpose of this program is to assist state, county, local, and tribal governments combat drug, gang, and violent crime in Arizona. After several years of decline in available program resources, funding for fiscal year 2015 was relatively stable, dropping only 0.2 percent from the previous fiscal year. However, this slight decline in program resources was due primarily to an increase in the local match rate, from 20 percent to a 25 percent requirement.

For fiscal year 2015, funds were awarded to projects addressing apprehension of drug offenders (14 projects), prosecution of drug offenses (17 projects), statewide forfeiture activities (one project), forensic support of task forces (two projects), and drug adjudication (one project). Criminal justice agencies submitted grant funding requests totaling \$14.5 million, exceeding the funding available by \$4.2 million. Of the \$10.3 million awarded, \$3.2 million will come from the federal Byrne Justice Assistance Grant, \$4.3 million from the state Drug and Gang Enforcement Account, \$2.5 million in local match contributions, and about \$210,000 from unspent prior year grant funds. The awards will fund salary and benefit expenses and overtime costs directly related to addressing drug crime in the state.

Electronic and Technology Support

Currently ACJC's IT Department is in the process of updating ACJC's internal network infrastructure. A new higher capacity file server in Phoenix is now in place and IT staff is establishing a new data recovery site in Tucson at the state data center. These two infrastructure additions will allow ACJC to replicate data to Tucson in order to be able to quickly recover in the event of a loss of connectivity in Phoenix. In addition, users are being upgraded with new laptops and monitors as most equipment reaches a three to five year useful life.

Crime Victim Services

During the course of FY2013, the Arizona Crime Victim Compensation Program received 1,645 claims and paid a total of \$3,778,361 in benefits to victims or service providers on behalf of victims. Compensation payments can be awarded in six different benefit categories: medical, funeral, mental health, work loss, transportation costs, and crime scene cleanup. The following letter was received by the Victims Compensation Unit for Mohave County:

April 7, 2014

Mohave County Attorney Victim Witness Program

I wish to acknowledge you and your work, and express my gratitude for the services your program has provided to me in a

time of need. Until I became a victim myself, I never realized how much a life can change and be so adversely affected. Thanks to you and your program, I have been alleviated of a good deal of suffering, both physical and emotional. I have been able to sleep better at night, knowing that the loss of my job did not mean that bills couldn't get paid. I knew that I could afford the medical care, services and equipment to help ease the pain.

My life has changed considerably as a result of the events and I am still trying to find a happy medium where I can still be a productive member of society someday soon. In the meantime, your work and your program has been a godsend to me. One day I hope to repay what has been done for me and other victims.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Executive Director's Report



The first half of 2014 was an extremely busy time for ACJC on many fronts. In addition to dealing with the hectic pace during legislative session, ACJC staff were dealing with numerous grant applications including those ACJC was applying for and those we oversee across Arizona for our criminal justice stakeholders.

I am very pleased with the support that House Bill 2322, ACJC's NICS Improvement Bill received from the law enforcement community throughout the state. It made a huge difference as we worked to clear several legislative hurdles throughout the process and ultimately led to the bill being passed unanimously and signed by the Governor. Keeping weapons out of the hands of the seriously mental ill as determined by the courts is an important step forward in making Arizona a safer state for all of its citizens.

I am also very proud to announce that on April 9th, ACJC's Crime Victim Services Program Manager Larry Grubbs received the Arizona Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award in Public Policy at the 2014 National Victims' Rights Awards Luncheon held in Phoenix, AZ. The Attorney General Distinguished Service Award in Public Policy is given each year to recognize the work of an individual done on behalf of Arizona victims of crime.

With the start of the new federal and state fiscal years on July 1, ACJC staff has been hard at work completing all of the reporting required as the state fiscal agent for various grants that we oversee. I would like to extend my thanks to all of the agencies that worked to provide ACJC with the information necessary to complete our reporting in a timely and accurate manner. We very much value our partnership and look forward to continuing to work together to improve public safety across Arizona.

JR Blackburn, Jr

Commission Members

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Maricopa County Attorney

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Joseph Arpaio
Maricopa County Sheriff

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Safford Police Chief

Timothy J. Dorn
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Pima County Sheriff

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Safford Mayor

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The strategies selected for implementation include:

- Strategy #1: Reduce Illicit Acquisition and Diversion of Prescription Medications
- Strategy #2: Promote Responsible Prescribing and Dispensing Policies and Practices
- Strategy #3: Enhance Rx Drug Practices and Policies in Law Enforcement
- Strategy #4: Increase Public Awareness and Patient Education about Prescription Drug Misuse
- Strategy #5: Enhance Assessment and Referral to Substance Abuse Treatment



In addition to being a member of the core group that developed and oversees the Initiative, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission's Statistical Analysis Center staff serve as evaluators of the Arizona Rx Initiative. To date, some of the more notable evaluation findings from the original pilot sites, Yavapai, Pinal, Graham, and Greenlee Counties, and Mohave County which joined the pilot sites in 2013, include:

- Number of prescriptions and pills for narcotics (like Oxycodone, Hydrocodone, Other Pain Relievers, Benzodiazepine, and Carisoprodol) **have decreased approximately 10%**;
- 39 prescription drug drop boxes are operational in the Initiative sites; together with take-back events, our counties **have collected 8,000 lbs** of unused/unneeded Rx; statewide, there are now 113 drop boxes in the state
- Over **1,500 prescribers** are receiving quarterly report cards of their prescribing habits
- **237 Law Enforcement Officers** have received Rx Crimes educational curriculum, **12,221 youth** and **976 adults** have received the Rx360 education and prevention curriculum
- Over **360,000 people** have been reached via public service messaging
- PDMP **sign up has increased 103%** in our pilot counties (almost double the rate of prescribers signed up as non-Initiative counties)
- PDMP **use has increased 56%** in our pilot counties (as high as 104% in one county) and the number of **prescribers making the queries** has **increased 31%**

For more information about Arizona's Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse Initiative see: <http://www.azcjc.gov/acjc.web/rx/default.aspx>



Meet ACJC's Newest Commissioner - Drew John

On February 21, 2014 Governor Jan Brewer appointed Graham County Supervisor, Drew John to fill the county supervisor's spot on the Commission. An Arizona native, Supervisor John has been in elected service to the people of the Gila Valley for over 20 years. He is currently on his 4th term serving the citizens of Graham County as County Supervisor of District One. He also serves on the AZ BLM Resource Advisory Commission, AZ/NM Coalition and other community committees.

Still Time to Give ACJC Your Feedback -

ACJC Customer Satisfaction Survey Closes on August 7, 2014 at 5:00 PM



In an effort to better serve Arizona's criminal justice agencies, ACJC annually conducts a Customer Satisfaction Survey. The purpose of this survey is to gauge stakeholders' level of satisfaction on a variety of ACJC program services. Your input provides extremely valuable information that is utilized to evaluate services and develop and implement program and service modifications.

The online ACJC Customer Satisfaction Survey can be completed at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ACJCCustsurv2014>. Please take a moment to help ACJC better serve you by completing this important survey.