

Department of Health Report to  
the Joint Labor, Health, and Social Services Interim Committee

Report on Children of Incarcerated Parents Study  
Via the Substance Abuse Control Plan

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Department of Family Services, Department of Workforce Services,  
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2002 Budget Session, Chapter 81  
W.S. 9-2-2707 (a and b)

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July 5, 2006

## Table of Contents

General Comments/Overview/Executive Summary .....	1
Specific Requirements of the Statute .....	1
Impact/Consequences/and Outcomes .....	2
Statistics .....	3
Recommendations .....	3
Summation and Conclusions.....	4
Timeline .....	Appendix A
Expenditure Report and Project Budget .....	Appendix B

1. General Comments/Overview/Executive Summary

The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) oversees the Study of Children of Incarcerated Persons (SCIP) to identify the specific needs and risk factors of this particularly vulnerable population. The purpose of the study is to develop recommendations for policymakers about how best to respond to these needs appropriately and effectively. To carry out this study, the WDH Substance Abuse Division (SAD) initially contracted with a research organization that was not able to obtain approval from the Wyoming Department of Health Institutional Review Board (WDH-IRB) for its study design. Subsequently, a new, competitive request for proposals was issued in May 2005 to ensure that the legislative requirements for this study could still be met. In September 2005, SAD contracted with the University of Wyoming's Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC) to carry out this study. WYSAC designed a multi-method research approach to collect high quality information while protecting the human subject participants (children, their caregivers, and their incarcerated parents) in the study. Specifically, the new SCIP research design includes the use of written surveys, face-to-face structured interviews, and focus groups, as well as an intense review of existing research. In early 2006, the WDH-IRB approved WYSAC's study design, and the research activities are under way. Once the WYSAC researchers determine the specific needs and risk factors of these children based on the comprehensive data being collected, concrete policy recommendations will be made for how best to assist these Wyoming children and the households in which they live.

In addition to working with WYSAC, SAD works collaboratively with a SCIP steering committee representing the Department of Corrections, Department of Education, Department of Family Services, the Maternal and Family Health Section WDH, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Faith Initiatives in the implementation of this study.

2. Specific Requirements of the Statute

Wyoming State Statute 9-2-2707 (a)(i) requires the department of health, department of education, department of family services, department of workforce services and department of corrections to jointly conduct a study of children of incarcerated persons and a study of offenders who reenter the community. The studies shall consider the following:

(i) Appropriate interventions to identify children whose parent or caretaker is incarcerated, common risk factors and recommendations for appropriate responses;

(ii) Integrating services to provide educational, employment, substance abuse, mental health, medical, housing and other services for purposes of assisting in the reentry of incarcerated persons into the community.

(b) The agencies shall jointly report annually on or before July 1 of each year following the effective date of this section to the joint labor, health and social services interim committee on the status of studies authorized by this section. The report shall include detailed information with respect to all expenditures made to conduct the studies. The studies shall be completed and submitted to the joint labor, health and social services interim committee no later than July 1, 2005.

### 3. Impact/Consequences/and Outcomes

Through a better understanding of the specific risks to the health and well-being of this unique population of children, Wyoming can reduce the prevalence of risk factors associated with Wyoming's children of incarcerated persons (CIP) population. The specific needs and common risk factors of these particular youth are only now being identified in Wyoming. This study is the first substantial effort to even identify the children of the incarcerated in our state. After the needs and risks of these children are assessed, the SCIP steering committee will be able to make clear recommendations for how to better serve these youth.

In the fall of 2005, WYSAC researchers began work—in collaboration with the SCIP steering committee—to design the protocol needed to implement the SCIP study. The process of obtaining full approval from two different Institutional Review Boards (Wyoming Department of Health and the University of Wyoming) took longer than many other studies because the project involves two groups of protected individuals (inmates and minors). At the end of October 2005, the protocol was formally reviewed by the University of Wyoming Institutional Review Board (UW-IRB). The protocol was conditionally accepted at this time with three minor changes suggested. At the beginning of November, the WDH-IRB also conditionally approved the protocol with a few changes suggested. In late November, however, the WDH-IRB issued a more extensive request for changes and clarifications. WYSAC re-submitted a revised proposal in mid-December. The WDH-IRB then issued five additional requests for clarification in January 2006. These concerns were also promptly addressed by WYSAC researchers and the revised proposal was submitted in early February. WDH-IRB granted final approval of the revised protocol on February 28, 2006.

Starting in September 2005, the SCIP steering committee began meeting quarterly to ensure on-going collaboration among all the organizations. The individuals involved in these meetings influenced the design and implementation of the study and verified that the purpose of the study would be met.

The SCIP survey focuses on seven areas: socio-demographics, family structure, housing, health, employment, education, and social environment. For example, the educational achievement section assesses educational attainment, aspirations and expectations while also asking about the importance, meaning, and relevance of education to the respondents.

The data collection phases of SCIP began Spring 2006. First, the Wyoming Department of Corrections provided the inmates the opportunity to participate in this study. Inmates were informed of the purpose of the study and that their family would receive incentives for participation in the study. Inmates were then given the option to decline or to accept. Those who opted to participate were asked to provide the information directly to WYSAC so the information is kept completely confidential. The participating inmates provided the information needed to identify and contact their children or their children's caregivers. Inmates with children over 18 or with children living outside of Wyoming were not eligible for participation in the study. Prisoners at the State Penitentiary, Honor Camp, Honor Farm, and the Women's Center were asked to participate and provide consent. Without consent from the inmate, researchers will not be allowed to contact the households in which these children live. In addition, inmates located in Texas, at the Wyoming Boot Camp, and the Casper Treatment Center were also given an opportunity to participate in the study. The list of potential participants was finalized in June 2006.

WYSAC researchers will then move forward in selecting the CIP households for participation in the study.

For a more detailed description of the various SCIP tasks and deliverables with corresponding target completion dates, please review the spreadsheet in Appendix A. A final report will be available August 31, 2007.

#### 4. Statistics

According to a special report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics issued by the U.S. Department of Justice through its Office of Justice Programs (BJS, 2000), the number of children, in 1991, who had a parent in prison at the state or federal level was 936,500 (or approximately one million children). By 1999, there were 1,498,800 children in America with an incarcerated parent.

- In less than a decade, the nation's CIP population grew by approximately 500,000 children (BJS, 2000).
- It is estimated that by 2007 America's CIP population will climb to 2,378,467 if current policies remain unaltered and uniformly carried out.
- It is estimated that more than half (55%) of all Wyoming prisoners have children under the age of 18 (BJS, 2000).
- It is estimated that almost 2,500 children in Wyoming (under the age of 18) have parents who are currently incarcerated (BJS, 2000).

#### 5. Recommendations

During the summer of 2006, WYSAC will contact the individuals identified as caregivers by the inmates and receive permission to survey them and/or the children. WYSAC will then mail out surveys to caretakers of children under 12 and begin the face-to-face interviews of the CIP adolescents (12-17 years old). By the end of the summer of 2006, two focus groups of caretakers of children with incarcerated parents will be conducted. All of the qualitative and quantitative data will then be analyzed to clearly identify the risks and needs of this population. This data analysis will also include comparisons to the general Wyoming youth population, since a number of questions from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA), and other nationally-validated youth risk and youth need surveys are included in the SCIP surveys.

WYSAC will also complete a "meta-analysis" of the results of existing research literature on SCIP in the coming year. This analysis will allow us to better understand local, state, and national findings on the CIP population and will also provide critical information on how other states have responded to the needs of this growing population of at-risk children. There will be an analysis of the comprehensive data collected through written surveys, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and the meta-analysis of current CIP research. All results will be in a final report due to SAD by July 31, 2007.

The steering committee will utilize this information to develop specific recommendations for the legislature. The research results will provide a crucial snapshot of the current needs and risk factors associated with Wyoming's often invisible CIP population. Please note that this research will not examine the long-term implications of having an incarcerated parent. The SCIP study could be modified to include a longitudinal

component that would track the risks and needs of the CIP population over time; the steering committee will provide information about this option with the recommendations. The Wyoming State Legislature may wish to invest in making this study longitudinal so that information about these children can be tracked over time to examine the long-term risks and needs of the CIP population as they enter into adulthood.

6. Summation and Conclusions

The data collection phase of the SCIP study will include mail surveys, face-to-face interviews, focus groups, a meta-analysis of the existing literature. The collected data will be analyzed by WYSAC and, by the end of July, 2007, specific recommendations will be generated by a steering committee. This steering committee includes representatives from the Department of Corrections, Department of Education, Department of Health Substance Abuse Division and Maternal and Child Health Section, Department of Family Services, the Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Faith Initiatives in the implementation of this study. The SCIP study is the critical first step in helping this unique population of children. By utilizing scientifically sound research approaches, SCIP will provide the information policymakers need to help serve the children of incarcerated persons and the households in which they live. Doing so will improve the chances that these children will grow up to contribute positively to the state of Wyoming and to the communities in which they live.

**Attachment A**  
**WYSAC Contract Deliverables and Timeline**  
**Study of Children of Incarcerated Parents**  
**October 2005 – June 2007**

Deliv. #	Deliverable	Work period
<b>1</b>	<b><i>Target Group Selection</i></b>	
1a	Work with CIP Steering Committee to develop prisoner survey to identify CIP target population	Oct 2005 - Feb 2006
1b	Collaborate with WDOC caseworkers to gain prisoner survey participation	Feb 2006 - April 2006
1c	Begin assembling CIP sample database	April 2006
1d	Select CIP sample for further data collection	April 2006 - May 2006
<b>2</b>	<b><i>CIP Data Collection</i></b>	
2a	Coordinate and schedule caregiver focus groups	June 2006
2b	Caregiver focus group data collection	July 2006 - Aug 2006
2c	Administer caregiver mail survey	July 2006 - Sept 2006
2d	Transcribe/Summarize focus group data to prepare for qualitative analysis	July 2006 - Oct 2006 (Dependent on when focus groups are scheduled and completed)
2e	Organize, enter, and clean quantitative data from caregiver mail surveys	July 2006 - Oct 2006 (Dependent on when focus groups are scheduled and completed)
2f	Analyze caregiver data for Interim Caregiver Report	Sept. 2005 - October 2006
2g	Coordinate and schedule face-to-face CIP interviews	June 2006 - Jan 2007
2h	Face-to-face interview and CIP survey data collection	June 2006 - Jan 2007
2i	Transcribe/Summarize face-to-face interview data to prepare for qualitative analysis	June 2006 - Jan 2007 (Dependent on when interviews are scheduled and completed)
2j	Organize, enter, and clean quantitative data from face-to-face interviews	June 2006 - Jan 2007 (Dependent on when interviews are scheduled and completed)

<b>3</b>	<b><i>Policy Recommendations Development</i></b>	
3a	Quantitative Data Analysis (CIP & Caregiver Survey Data)	Feb 2007 - April 2007
3b	Qualitative Data Analysis (Caregiver Focus Groups, CIP Interview Data)	Feb 2007 - April 2007
3c	Conduct Meta-Analysis of CIP Research Literature	Dec 2005 - Jan 2007
3d	Using data analysis results from all above sources, develop concrete policy recommendations for meeting the needs of the CIP population in Wyoming	April 2007 - May 2007
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Reporting/Communication Responsibilities</i></b>	
4a	Communicate regularly with Substance Abuse Division including written monthly updates and regular informal contact on a weekly basis	Ongoing
4b	Participate in quarterly meetings with CIP Steering Committee	Ongoing
4c	Develop modified study design proposal for WDOH-IRB review	Sept. – Feb. 2006
4d	Develop focus group protocols for caregivers/guardians	Sept. – Feb. 2006
4e	Develop face-to-face interview protocols for CIP population ages 12 – 17	Sept. – Feb. 2006
4f	Develop caregiver mail surveys for caregivers of CIP population under 12 years of age	Sept. – Feb. 2006
4g	Submit modified study design including all interview and survey protocols to WDOH-IRB for review and approval	Oct. 2005 and Final Approval Feb. 2006
4h	Prepare CIP Caregiver Interim Report	By October 31, 2006
4i	Finalize CIP Meta-Analysis Report	By Jan 31, 2007
4j	Provide Substance Abuse Division with assistance on approximately two legislative update interim reports and/or Power Point presentations	By Aug. 31, 2007
4k	Prepare, and submit for SAD and WDOH publication review, a final CIP Study Report including relevant data analyses and policy recommendations	By July 31, 2007
4l	Prepare and deliver a Power Point presentation of the Final CIP Study Report to the CIP Steering Committee, the Sponsors of the Substance Abuse Control Plan, and Legislature, if appropriate.	By Aug. 31, 2007



Appendix B:

Tobacco Settlement Funds for Study of Children of Incarcerated Parents  
Substance Abuse Control Plan  
W.S. 9-2-2707 (a and b)

Status Report July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006

1. Authorized Expenditures

Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center (WYSAC)	
<i>Total Paid July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006</i>	\$100,000
<i>Total remaining in Contract to be paid July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007</i>	\$134,180
<i>Total Project</i>	<u>\$234,180</u>