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Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)

FAMILY REUNIFICATION POLICY (03.02.102)

TWO-PAGE SUMMARY

The Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) has enacted a **Family Reunification Policy (03.02.102)** to ensure incarcerated individuals can interact with their families throughout incarceration and that families understand MDOC operations and policies. This policy recognizes the **significant impact of incarceration on families, especially children**, and the **crucial role family support plays in an offender's success** during incarceration and post-release. The MDOC aims for transparency and responsiveness towards prisoner families and emphasizes working constructively with them.

Key Components of this Policy Include:

Public Information and Transparency:

- The MDOC maintains a website with information and resources for families. (Website)
- A communication system is available for family members to sign up for information, including visiting disruptions or facility emergencies.

Family Advisory Board (FAB):

- The MDOC was required to establish a **permanent Family Advisory Board** under the Family Reunification Policy. (Application)
- The **FAB's core responsibilities** are to: **provide feedback and advice on policies and programs impacting family reunification**; **enhance communication between the MDOC and families**; identify barriers to family reunification; and file an annual report.
- The FAB can create **regional committees/facility-focused family councils** with MDOC approval.
- Meetings can be virtual or in-person, and **at least two public informational meetings must be held annually** in separate regions for public comment.
- FAB information, including contact details and an email for proposed agenda topics, is published on the MDOC website and in facility waiting rooms.

Family Reunification Through Stages of Incarceration and Release:

Reception:

- Individuals entering can provide **emergency contact information**.
- They're offered the opportunity to voluntarily complete **two medical forms**: the **CHJ-718** for verbal communication and the **CHJ-121** for written medical records. Medical information can't be shared with family unless a release is on file and staff are authorized.
- Individuals can provide an address for a family member to receive a **MDOC Family Orientation packet** at no cost.

Incarceration:

- Individuals are permitted **visits, telephone calls, and mail with family members** according to specific policy directives.
- They may attend **family-oriented programming** (e.g., One Day with God, Fathers Who Care).
- **The Department shall develop and offer self-help parenting materials for prisoners within Correctional Facilities Administration (CFA) facilities, including maintaining a library of such materials related to parenting and family reunification**.
- Designated staff provide accurate information to family members about an incarcerated person's status (e.g., segregation, communication restrictions), but medical information requires a release.
- A **Family Information Packet** is maintained on the MDOC website and reviewed annually by the Department and the FAB.

Preparation for Release:

- During Parole Eligibility Report (PER) or Lifer Review Report (LRR) preparation, the prisoner's preferred home placement is documented.
- For individuals in the **In-Reach** process, the Institutional Parole Agent (IPA) works to ensure their reentry plan includes family support and recommends family reunification activities.

Parole Supervision/Reentry:

- Assigned Field Agents communicate with parolees and their families to assess family supports or challenges and discuss progress, and may recommend family reunification support in the community.
- **Family members shall be allowed to participate in regional Offender Success Advisory Councils** to help establish reentry priorities that support family reunification.
- Departmental contracts for returning citizen support are to include **family reunification and family counseling services** as allowable programs, subject to contractual limitations.