



Implementation of an enhanced probation program: Evaluating process and preliminary outcomes



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ABSTRACT

Supervision, Monitoring, Accountability, Responsibility, and Treatment (SMART) is Kentucky's enhanced probation pilot program modeled after Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE). SMART is proposed to decrease substance use, new violations, and incarceration-related costs for high-risk probationers by increasing and randomizing drug testing, intensifying supervision, and creating linkages with needed resources (i.e., mental health and substance use). SMART adopts a holistic approach to rehabilitation by addressing mental health and substance abuse needs as well as life skills for fostering deterrence of criminal behavior vs. punitive action only. A mixed methods evaluation was implemented to assess program implementation and effectiveness. Qualitative interviews with key stakeholders (i.e., administration, judges, attorneys, and law enforcement/corrections) suggested successful implementation and collaboration to facilitate the pilot program. Quantitative analyses of secondary Kentucky Offender Management System (KOMS) data (grant Year 1: 07/01/2012–06/30/2013) also suggested program effectiveness. Specifically, SMART probationers showed significantly fewer: violations of probation (1.2 vs. 2.3), positive drug screens (8.6% vs. 29.4%), and days incarcerated (32.5 vs. 118.1) than comparison probationers. Kentucky's SMART enhanced probation shows preliminary success in reducing violations, substance use, and incarceration. Implications for practice and policy will be discussed.

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1. Introduction

Community supervision of individuals involved in the criminal justice system (i.e., probation and parole) is a necessary part of the corrections continuum of services, specifically offering an alternative to overcrowded penal institutions. In January 2014, nine of Kentucky's 12 Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities state-wide were over capacity; another facility was at 100% capacity (KY DOC, 2014). Community supervision represents the opportunity for individuals involved in the criminal justice system to remain (or become) non-incarcerated, yet still stay under the authority of the DOC. Based on estimates from the Bureau of Justice Statistics for the United States, in 2012, an estimated 4.1 million adults were classified as on or were moved off probation (Bonczar & Maruschak, 2013).

Based on information provided by Bonczar and Maruschak (2013), 32% of probationers in 2012 failed to complete their probation. The high rates of failure on traditional probation have suggested the need to move beyond traditional probation models (Hawken & Kleiman, 2009). Enhanced probation models have been developed to augment the traditional community corrections supervision options by providing more linkage to services in order to help increase successful completion as well as address co-occurring issues, particularly for those with drug and alcohol problems because this represents a growing portion of community corrections. This paper focuses on Kentucky's attempt to develop an enhanced probation program modeled after Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE), to better provide for those high-risk/high-needs individuals in need of enhanced services as well as alleviate the over-crowding issue in the penal institutions which is partially related to individuals failing at community supervision.

1.1. Hawaii's Opportunity Probation with Enforcement (HOPE)

HOPE started in 2004 and was created by Judge Steve Alm (Alm, 2010). The idea was to "fix" the probation and parole system,

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specifically for those with alcohol and drug problems by offering more treatment-focused services and immediate accountability for failure to comply with program terms (i.e., violations, substance use, etc.; Alm, 2010). The program focused on high-risk drug offenders at risk of failing probation; the strategy involved more intense supervision, new drug testing procedures, and immediate consequences for violations incurred while in the program (Lawrence, 2010). Rather than being drug tested monthly, and having the information on testing in advance, HOPE probationers were required to call a hotline daily to learn if they needed to report for a drug test that day (Alm, 2010; National Institute of Justice [NIJ] Staff, 2008). Historically, probationers may have avoided/eluded appointments with a probation officer, failed to take a drug test, and/or failed to attend or complete treatment numerous times before facing possible revocation of probation and imprisonment. However, probationers in the HOPE program faced the prospect of being jailed almost immediately for violating probation terms (Alm, 2010; NIJ Staff, 2008). The immediate response and accountability for the probationers' actions has been identified as one of the critical components to the success of HOPE; the certainty of punishment rather than the severity is a focus (Kleiman & Hawken, 2008).

Outcomes research and cost assessments of the fiscal impact of the HOPE program have presented promising findings, specifically in terms of reduced drug use and recidivism, as well as increased compliance (Lawrence, 2010). During the first six months of participation in HOPE, research suggests the rate of positive drug tests fell by 93% and missed probation officer appointments dropped from 14% to 1%. Research also concluded that traditional probationers were three times more likely to be sent to prison than HOPE probationers (Lawrence, 2010). Further, according to the Research and Statistics Branch of the Hawaii Office of the Attorney General, for 685 probationers who were in the HOPE program for at least three months, the missed appointment rate fell from 13.3% to 2.6% and "dirty" drug tests fell from 49.3% to 6.5% (NIJ Staff, 2008). Finally, in a randomized controlled trial where probationers were either assigned to HOPE or probation-as-usual, HOPE probationers had reductions in positive drug tests and missed appointments, and were significantly less likely to be arrested during follow-up at 3 months, 6 months, and 12 months. HOPE probationers spent about one-third as many days in prison on revocations or new convictions (Hawken & Kleiman, 2009).

The promising findings related to HOPE probation have led to an increased interest in implementing this program in other locations. There are now multiple states (i.e., South Dakota, Nevada; Lawrence, 2010), including Kentucky, which have modeled and implemented probation programs similar to HOPE with the goal of reducing: drug use, new violations, and incarceration-related costs for high-risk probationers. Despite the extant literature showing the success of the HOPE model, there is a dearth of research published on the replications of the HOPE model. There are multiple reasons proposed for this: (1) the necessary buy-in from all vested parties is difficult to achieve; and (2) it is difficult to maintain fidelity to the model as the program is implemented by different judges and jurisdictions (Buntin, 2009). To the best of our knowledge, this study is one of the first publications focused on describing and evaluating a model similar to HOPE.

1.2. Kentucky Supervision, Monitoring, Accountability, Responsibility, and Treatment (SMART) probation

In an effort to improve public safety and reduce failure rates of individuals on probation, House Bill 463, Section 103 authorized the Department of Corrections (DOC) to partner with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to implement a pilot project similar to the HOPE model. The Kentucky SMART Probation

Program attempts to identify probationers at risk for failing and being returned to incarceration as a result of such failure. SMART participation provides more intensive supervision and more frequent/random urine drug screens than traditionally received while a defendant is on probation. There are currently eleven counties located in six jurisdictions within the Commonwealth of Kentucky that are serving as pilot sites. The six jurisdictions involved in implementing the SMART program provide the setting for the current evaluation.

Depending on the amount of time left on a probation sentence when the defendant is identified for the program as well as compliance with the terms of probation, time in the SMART program could range from one to five years. Probationers are identified for participation in the SMART program in one of two ways. First, a probationer may be identified by the judge or probation officer based on assessment scores (Level of Service/Case Management Inventory [LS/CMI], more information is included on this within the measures section) indicating high-risk and high-needs, specifically in relation to alcohol and/or drug problems. Second, a judge or probation officer may identify or recommend an existing probationer for entry into the SMART program due to repeated new violations (i.e., missed appointments, substance use, etc.), the exhaustion of present resources, and/or impending revocation. Exclusionary criteria, for the pilot program, were violent or sexual offenses. Services vary for each probationer based on individual need and results of their validated risk assessment (i.e., LS/CMI). Services included, but were not limited to: intensive probation supervision and monitoring for compliance, judicial oversight, substance abuse education and treatment, mental health assessment and treatment, life skills counseling, employment and education counseling, incentives and sanctions, frequent and random urine drug screens, and attendance at self-help and support groups. As a result of grant funding, the project was able to provide a call-in system for probationers to be informed of when they were to provide urine drug screens. SMART probationers were required to call the system daily. Additionally, grant funds provided for much-needed drug testing supplies to test probationers more frequently for synthetic drugs of abuse not detected on traditional drug screens.

Goals for the Kentucky SMART program included the following: (1) Monitor probationers for illicit drug use with regular and rapid-result drug screening. (2) Monitor probationers for violations of other rules and probation terms, including failure to pay court-ordered financial obligations such as child support or victim restitution. (3) Respond to violations of such rules with immediate arrest of the violating probationer, and swift and certain modification of the conditions of probation, including imposition of short jail stays (which may gradually become longer with each additional violation). (4) Immediately respond to probationers who have absconded from supervision with service of bench warrants and immediate sanctions. (5) Provide rewards to probationers who comply with such rules. (6) Target treatment resources to offenders who request treatment and who are repeat violators. (7) Establish procedures to terminate program participation by, and initiate revocation to a term of incarceration for, probationers who habitually fail to abide by program rules and pose a threat to public safety. (8) Reduce violation behavior, new crimes, and revocations to prison.

In order to implement the SMART program, Judge Alm was invited to Kentucky after HB 463 was implemented. He facilitated training for judges, DOC, and AOC via an overview of the existing HOPE program. HB 463 stated that two pilot programs were to be implemented, one rural and one urban. Six judges volunteered and were interested in implementing the program. After all sites were identified, materials provided by Judge Alm were used to conduct training for the judges, probation officers, and other key partners.

After the training, the judges went back to each jurisdiction and implemented the program. When the current Community Corrections grant was received, it provided needed funds for the call-in line, other drug testing supplies, and the evaluation.

The purpose of this paper was to examine process and outcome evaluation data collected as part of the pilot project to better understand the implementation of the SMART program as well as associated outcomes. This paper seeks to fill the scarcity of literature available on programs based on the HOPE model. This research seeks to examine and answer two primary questions. This study examined, (1) what were program impacts, barriers to implementation, and needed changes/areas of focus for future program years? This question was examined via process evaluation data from the perspectives of key stakeholders, in terms of the impact of the program, barriers to implementation, and future recommendations. The process evaluation data was broken down to examine overall themes as well as responses from different disciplinary perspectives. Further, this research examined, (2) what is the effectiveness of the SMART program (as defined in the goals via reduced positive drug screens, violations, incarcerations)? The outcome evaluation, based on secondary data collected from the DOC, examined whether or not this pilot program showed effectiveness. Combined, these data offer information on implementation, lessons learned, and preliminary outcomes to guide other entities considering the implementation of an enhanced probation model.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants

2.1.1. Process evaluation

Participants were 48 individuals who completed an interview as part of the process evaluation examining the implementation of the enhanced SMART probation program. Participants included: administration (i.e., AOC and DOC representatives), as well as judges, attorneys (i.e., prosecution and defense), and law enforcement/corrections officers (i.e., jailers, probation officers) from each jurisdiction involved in implementing the SMART probation program. Individuals to be interviewed as part of the process evaluation were identified in conjunction with AOC and DOC, both key collaborating agencies in this project, as well as judges from each jurisdiction. An email was sent to each judge, by the AOC project coordinator, requesting names and contact information for individuals critical to the implementation of the SMART probation program, specifically focusing on those identified in the HB 463 legislation including: attorneys and law enforcement/corrections. The process evaluation focused on the six Kentucky jurisdictions implementing the SMART probation program: Allen/Simpson, Campbell, Jefferson, Lincoln/Pulaski/Rockcastle, Pike, and Shelby/Spencer/Anderson. These sites were included because AOC

received grant funding from a Community Corrections grant to pilot test the SMART probation model. The pilot sites for the SMART program were selected by the Chief Justice and included judicial volunteers. More detailed descriptive information on the six SMART sites is included in Table 1. Program evaluation was required as part of the funding.

Across the six project jurisdictions, recruitment yielded a high participation rate. Overall, 86% of those identified and approached for the study agreed to participate. Of the 56 individuals identified for participation, 48 completed the interview. Interviews were completed with three administrators, six judges, thirteen attorneys, and twenty-six law enforcement/corrections personnel. Only 8 individuals approached for study participation did not complete the interview; these individuals either did not respond to requests for an interview via email and/or phone or could not be scheduled within the timeframe allocated for the process interviews. Participation rates across the six jurisdictions varied from a high of 100% to a low of 64%.

2.1.2. Outcome evaluation

The outcome evaluation relied on secondary data as collected and recorded by the probation officers and stored in the Kentucky Offender Management System (KOMS). Participants were 307 individuals who entered the SMART probation program during the grant period (between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013); this represented all individuals who had received grant-funded SMART probation. Individuals in the SMART program were compared with a non-equivalent comparison group of similarly matched probationers ($N = 300$). The non-equivalent comparison group was selected from other individuals currently on probation based on the following criteria: (1) client status: active (i.e., currently under probation supervision); (2) supervision type: probation; (3) client type: probation (shock), and probation (Regular); (4) supervision counties: Allen/Simpson, Campbell, Jefferson, Lincoln/Pulaski/Rockcastle, Pike, and Shelby/Spencer/Anderson; (5) SMART Special Condition Exist: No (i.e., the comparison group were not participants of SMART); and (6) Offender Record – Active Probation (i.e., not currently incarcerated). Regular probation refers to the traditional method of being referred to community supervision at sentencing in lieu of incarceration. Shock probation is a mechanism for transferring non-violent incarcerated offenders into community supervision via a petition to the judge, after serving at least 30 days but not more than 180 days. Individuals on shock and regular probation receive the same probation services; shock probation is a legal mechanism for moving incarcerated offenders to probation.

The selection of the non-equivalent comparison group was performed by DOC staff familiar with KOMS. Despite the similarities with the SMART group, individuals in the comparison group were not identified for participation in the SMART program; these individuals may have not had the same level of risk/needs

Table 1
SMART site descriptions.

Jurisdiction	SMART ($N = 307$)	Beale code/classification	Population (US Census)	Drug/narcotic offenses reported	Assault offenses reported
Allen & Simpson	20.8%	6/rural	20,311	621	36
		6/rural	17,793	426	158
Campbell	1.3%	1/urban	90,988	1610	943
Jefferson	30.3%	1/urban	756,832	492	585
Lincoln, Pulaski, & Rockcastle	30.6%	7/rural	24,370	147	75
		5/rural	63,907	461	187
		7/rural	16,693	248	39
Pike	7.2%	7/rural	63,380	423	368
Shelby, Spencer, & Anderson	9.8%	1/urban	44,216	217	360
		1/urban	17,637	69	20
		6/rural	21,811	255	117

and/or there may have not been space in the pilot SMART program to allow participation. The comparison group received probation services as usual (i.e., monthly drug testing, visits/supervision by the assigned probation officer). In addition to the selection criteria above, the number of individuals identified for the comparison group was designed to be proportionate to the number of SMART participants from that specific jurisdiction. Because there were a greater number of individuals on regular probation in Kentucky, not all individuals on probation in a specific jurisdiction were selected. Only those who best met the criteria described above were pulled for the study analyses as the non-equivalent comparison group.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Process evaluation

A set of interview instruments were used to systematically collect qualitative data from individuals involved in implementing the SMART probation program. These interviews were adapted from previous process evaluations examining the implementation of community-based treatment alternatives for individuals involved in the criminal justice system (see Logan, Williams, Leukefeld, & Minton, 2000). Please see Appendix 1 for a list of process evaluation questions. The process evaluation interviews for the first grant year primarily captured data on: program goals/organization, the perceived impact of the program on the community/judicial system as well as the barriers to program implementation and future recommendations.

2.2.2. Outcome evaluation

All data for the outcome evaluation was secondary data collected from the DOC Kentucky Offender Management System (KOMS). The outcomes focused on the following information: (1) participation site information; (2) the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI); (3) drug screening/results; (4) violations of probation conditions, and (5) movements/alterations of sentencing and incarceration cost.

2.2.2.1. Participating site information. SMART jurisdictions were classified according to rural-urban distinctions. Beale 2003 rural-urban continuum codes were utilized to classify each county accordingly (i.e., range 1–9; 1 = county in a metro area of 1 million or more to 9 = completely rural or less than 2500 urban population, not adjacent to a metro area; Economic Research Service [ERS], 2003). For the purpose of this paper, rural and urban distinctions followed the guidelines of the Economic Research Service suggesting that non-metropolitan areas (i.e., Beale Code 4 or greater) be considered rural (ERS, 2007).

2.2.2.2. LS/CMI. The Kentucky DOC utilizes the LS/CMI as a risk assessment to measure the following eight domains which are used for case management to focus on individualized needs: (1) Criminal History (CH; scores range: 0–8); (2) Education and Employment (EE; scores range: 0–9); (3) Family and Marital (FM; scores range: 0–4); (4) Leisure and Recreation (LR; scores range: 0–2); (5) Companions (CO; scores range: 0–4); (6) Alcohol and Drug Problems (ADP; scores range: 0–8); (7) Pro-criminal Attitude (PA; scores range: 0–4); and, (8) Anti-social Pattern (AP; scores range: 0–4). The LS/CMI is a trademarked assessment available from Multi-Health Systems. The scores on each domain of the LS/CMI can categorize the probationer's risks and needs. In addition to the eight subscales, a total score is calculated; a higher total and subscale scores reflect higher levels of risk and needs. In practice, this score is primarily used to categorize the offender based on

risks/needs. For the SMART program, these scores were also used to help identify potential participants in the program.

There has been extensive work establishing the validity and reliability of the LS/CMI. Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha is high. In an examination of United States community offenders the Cronbach's alpha was .90. Further, the Cronbach's alpha has been stable across multiple samples and populations (i.e., institutionalized offenders, adult Canadian offenders; Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2004). Research has also purported the validity of the LS/CMI is strong and consistent (Andrews et al., 2004). Specifically, predictive validity for general recidivism and re-incarceration are high; established validity has been consistent across a diversity of populations (i.e., United States, United Kingdom, Singapore) as well as for specific offender subgroups (i.e., female, youth, violent, etc.).

2.2.3. Drug screening, violations and alterations of sentencing

Drug screening, violations, and alterations of sentencing were all recorded by the probation officer and entered into KOMS by the same individual. Drug screening/results were recorded as the date of test, disposition of the test (positive/negative), and, if positive, the substance of use. Programmatic violations were coded into seven general categories: (1) substance use (i.e., testing positive for alcohol and/or any illegal/illicit substance as well as drug possession charges); (2) probation (i.e., absconding, changing address and/or failure to report change without approval, failure to report arrest, citation, and/or summons, failure to report to probation officer, falsifying report, and leaving area of supervision without permission); (3) new charges (i.e., new felony arrest, misdemeanor, and receiving a misdemeanor conviction for carrying a concealed deadly weapon); (4) substance abuse treatment (i.e., failure to attend AA, failure to complete treatment, failure to pay for drug testing, failure to provide verification of meeting attendance, failure to seek evaluation and follow all treatment recommendations, and failure to submit to drug testing); (5) fees and services (i.e., failure to complete community service, failure to make restitution as directed, and failure to pay supervision fee as directed); (6) other treatment requirements (i.e., failure to complete treatment for violent offenders, failure to comply with any medical or mental health treatment, and failure to provide verification of attendance to GED classes); and, (7) other (i.e., those coded with this classification by the probation officer). Alterations of sentencing were recorded if the probationer was sentenced to jail time and/or if probation was revoked. Costs associated with alterations of sentencing were estimated based on Kentucky DOC information for jail incarceration (2013).

2.3. Procedure

2.3.1. Process evaluation

Data collection for the process evaluation was conducted between March 2013 and April 2013. All study procedures were reviewed and approved by the Morehead State University Institutional Review Board.

Individuals identified as key partners were recruited to be part of the process evaluation. Once an individual was identified as part of the SMART probation project implementation, he/she was contacted via email and/or by phone by a research assistant and was provided with information about the evaluation. If the individual agreed, a date was scheduled to complete the face-to-face interview. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of participants and lasted approximately fifteen to forty-five minutes. Each participant was interviewed privately and reminded that participation was voluntary and confidential. A consent script was reviewed orally with each participant prior to beginning the interview. Interviews were audio-taped (with permission) to

ensure accuracy of information and to allow for more detailed interview transcripts. All participants agreed to audio-taping the interview. Participants received a mug as a token of appreciation for time and effort.

2.3.2. Outcome evaluation

Data collection for the outcome evaluation was conducted as part of program operations by the DOC between July 2012 and June 2013 to coincide with grant funding. Thus, only secondary data supplied to the evaluator was available for the outcome evaluation. All study procedures were reviewed and approved by the Morehead State University Institutional Review Board. At the end of the first grant year, the Evaluator received a file with the outcome evaluation data extracted from the KOMS system. Data were de-identified and contained only information relevant to the evaluating progress toward SMART probation goals and objectives.

2.4. Analyses

2.4.1. Process evaluation

The qualitative data collection used descriptive inquiry strategies to create a greater understanding of issues by examining individual experiences. Data was collected to focus on how the individual described his/her own experiences. Then, data was aggregated to examine what was common and/or uncommon about these experiences (Faulkner & Faulkner, 2014). Further, for this research, a phenomenological approach was utilized. This approach was selected to meet the goals of the process evaluation and to understand the experience implementing the SMART probation program for those in the study (Creswell, 2009).

A six step approach was utilized for data analysis (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The first step involved organizing the data and transcribing the interviews. The second step required immersion in the data, which included reading the data collected multiple times which led to the development of themes. The third step was to code all data into categories. The fourth step involved reviewing the coding and generating themes to include in the data analysis. The fifth step was to select narrative passages to describe the developed themes. Finally, the sixth step was to interpret the findings. The majority of the data analyses were performed by the third and fourth authors.

Data coding began with a review of participant responses guided by the research questions. This generated an initial list of themes, which was then added to as additional themes emerged from the data. To test the coding and ensure reliability, two authors coded all of the transcripts. Discrepancies in coding were discussed with the first author; all discrepancies were discussed until 100% agreement was reached between the readers.

2.4.2. Outcome evaluation

Bivariate statistics, specifically Chi-Square and *t*-tests, were used to compare LS/CMI scores, drug screening/results, violations, and alterations of sentencing between groups. All analyses were conducted using PASW Statistics 18. Findings were considered statistically significant at $p < .05$. This significance level is standard for most studies and represents, "The theoretical risk of Type I error, α , is established when a researcher selects an alpha level (often $\alpha = 0.05$) and uses that alpha level to decide what range of values for the test statistic such as a *z* or *t* ratio will be used to reject H_0 ." (Warner, 2013, p. 85). All data were screened to ensure assumptions, including sample size, were met prior to data analyses. Additionally, sample size permitted the examination of small, medium, and large effect sizes for the *t*-tests; and, medium and large effect sizes for the chi-square tests (Cohen, 1992).

3. Results

3.1. Findings: process evaluation

3.1.1. Impacts of the SMART program

Themes related to the various impacts of the SMART program were predominant in the process evaluation interviews as demonstrated by 96% of respondents mentioning an impact associated with the SMART program. A number of sub-themes emerged, which highlighted the specific impacts of the program, including improvements: (1) with communication and collaboration; (2) to the probation system; and, (3) in opportunities for probationers.

3.1.1.1. Communication and collaboration. Of those mentioning an impact of the SMART program, 84% discussed that, both for probationers and other key stakeholders, there were positives associated with the enhanced communication and collaboration. Among the interviewees who discussed communication and collaboration, the most predominantly mentioned aspect of communication was related to the higher level of supervision for probationers (92%), which allowed for developing better rapport with the assigned officer as well as the ability for probation officers to notice negative behaviors before they spiraled. This aspect was discussed by the majority of all disciplines: attorneys (85%), law enforcement/corrections (69%), administration (66%), and, judges (66%) focusing on the increased contact with probation officers as a strategy to build rapport and provide additional monitoring of and communication regarding progress and/or lack thereof. As one law enforcement/correction individual explained:

I think it is effective in the sense that it allows us officers to spend more time with offenders one-on-one, and also with the way the urine screens are working, it holds them [probationers] more accountable and there's a lot more intensive supervision, which allows the officers to build a better rapport and better relationships with the offender.

An attorney further elaborated by saying:

It's a more intensive form of probation where they're reporting much more than once a month. With the SMART program these people are being supervised by reporting multiple days each week, and for drug offenders a lot them that's exactly what they need because addiction is so hard to beat. With this level of supervision, there is always someone watching them.

The second aspect discussed by a significant minority of respondents (42%) was the increased collaboration and relationship building between various key stakeholders and agencies (i.e. probation with judges, DOC and AOC). Specifically, law enforcement/corrections (38% of this subgroup) also discussed how the program had provided an opportunity for enhancing their relationship with the judge. As one law enforcement/corrections individual illuminated:

It [the program] has certainly caused us to work more closely with certain groups, certain providers and also strengthened our relationships with the court, I think. And knowing what the court expects and, I think, an officer working closely with a judge and the court helps the client as well because everybody is on the same page about how the client is progressing and what is needed for the individual to move forward.

3.1.1.2. Probation system. Of those mentioning an impact of the SMART program, 80% of the participants discussed improvements to probation. First, 59% of these participants discussed the

immediate delivery of sanctions for all SMART program violations. More specifically, the majority of judges (100%) and administration (66%) expressed satisfaction with the ability to provide an immediate sanction for a program violation, rather than experience the delay associated with traditional probation. One judge described:

Our theory is that in order to modify behavior, the consequences have to be sure, have to be swift, and have to be in proportion to what you did. So, we try to get them in here as soon as possible because you can't punish somebody next month for something that happened last month. It's not fair.

Second, the additional accountability the program required was discussed by a majority of respondents (59%). Judges (66%) and law enforcement/corrections (46%) most commonly mentioned this by discussing how probationers were now more involved in their supervision process and more self-guided. Two law enforcement/corrections participants explained it this way:

It has really encouraged the offender to be part of their own supervision. Rather than us speaking at them or telling them what to do, it is a self-guided probation that I am there to help navigate and keep them on the right track.

So the biggest reason for me why I really love this program is you give people the opportunity to prove themselves. I've seen grown men achieve their GED. Mostly because we have said you need to get your GED, but then after they got it after they received their GED they were so proud of that.

Third, a significant minority (46%) mentioned how the SMART program established a more frequent and comprehensive drug screening process when compared to the capabilities of a traditional probation program. All administration (100%) discussed the ability to screen for drugs which were not previously included (i.e., synthetics) and the ability to use random drug screening as a deterrent for continued use. Attorneys (38%) discussed the additional confidence/certainty that more frequent drug testing brings to probation. One administrator explained:

Without this grant, we wouldn't have had the toll-free call-in number for clients. We wouldn't have had the frequent drug testing. We wouldn't have had the ability to test for synthetic drugs of abuse, which are a huge problem.

There were some noteworthy impacts which were not as commonly recognized. Some participants discussed the benefits of using an evidence-based practice (11%). Specifically, these respondents discussed how the DOC was interested and willing to use new practices to help probationers better themselves and ultimately successfully complete probation and move forward with a better life. One law enforcement/corrections participant noted:

I think any time that you use best practices or evidence-based practices to supervise offenders in the community in using a program that will measure someone's criminogenic needs. It really creates a win-win situation, not only for the offender but also for the community. I know the program utilizes a risk instrument in the front-end that identifies a target population.

Finally, in some instances, process evaluation participants mentioned that the SMART program was credited with decreasing the docket load and enhancing court responsiveness (5%). In some jurisdictions, the probationer signed an agreement of understanding regarding programmatic sanctions; if they violated programmatic terms – the probation officer followed the guidelines and did not need to approach the judge to discuss sanctions for a violation. Specifically, one judge explained:

I think it has the potential to decrease the docket loads and the reason why I say that is because we've placed a lot the sanctions in position with probation and parole. And in doing our guidelines here, I've already just basically given them a blank commitment order and we set up guidelines as to if it is a first positive they will do 3 days in jail, if it is a second, then its doubled. So on and so forth. They don't have to come back to me for that type of approval unless the probationer objects to that or has some issues that they need to bring before me.

3.1.1.3. Opportunities for probationers. Of those mentioning an impact of the SMART program, a final impact discussed was related to the opportunities for probationers (78%). First, because of the enhanced SMART program and funding, over half (53%) of the participants mentioned savings associated with the program. This theme was only mentioned by law enforcement/corrections (50%) and primarily focused on cost savings associated with more intensive supervision, and in theory less revocations and incarcerations. For example, one law enforcement/corrections individual stated when discussing opportunities:

One of the things may be the financial savings that this program can have. The program may obviously use some resources and cost and have some financial cost but if it's successful then you're looking at the bigger cost savings, giving the high cost of incarceration to house inmates for say a year or more.

Second, as mentioned by 44% of participants discussing opportunities, the mere existence of the SMART program provided an additional option for probationers in lieu of jail time and the ability to divert clients out of the prison/jail system, particularly for those high risk/high needs clients who are likely to fail on traditional probation. Attorneys (62%) and judges (50%) discussed the SMART program as an effort to reduce the prison population by providing an alternative opportunity to a high-risk population and hopefully provide them with the chance to learn structure, obtain/maintain sobriety, and learn how to function as a productive member of society. One attorney stated:

I think our agency benefits just by the benefit that our clients, the defendants, find from the SMART program, which is in lieu of jail time, they can be sanctioned immediately, then be re-released back into the community for community supervision, and since I do work for a state agency I guess I am always aware of the cost to the state and that this in a way, by not incarcerating these individuals, it will be a savings to our agency by not putting them in the prison facilities.

One-third (33%, each theme respectively) mentioned that probationers now have the opportunity to address identified substance abuse and/or mental health issues and have the opportunity to receive referrals, which were previously unavailable. One judge explained:

The opportunity is for them to have additional resources, support, and accountability to help them successfully complete probation, help them avoid revocation.

3.1.2. Problems/barriers with implementation

Eighty-five percent of process evaluation participants identified problems and barriers associated with SMART program implementation. There were a variety of problems and barriers identified via the process evaluation interviews; these were categorized into the following four categories: (1) programmatic set-up and implementation; (2) limitations and restrictions in opportunities; (3) communication; and, (4) morale.

3.1.2.1. Programmatic set-up and implementation. Of those discussing a problem/barrier, 76% mentioned issues with the general programmatic set-up and implementation. Among these individuals, the most predominantly discussed problem was related to workload (71%). Over half of law enforcement/corrections (54%) voiced concern about the increased workload for probation officers from the required paperwork, increased intensity of supervision, and additional drug testing. For this pilot project, the SMART probation officers were often managing their SMART caseload in addition to their traditional probation caseload and, at times, having to rely on non-SMART probation officers to conduct SMART drug testing; thus, creating additional work for a variety of individuals. Two law enforcement/corrections participants illustrated:

It [SMART program] has definitely required me to rely on other officers a lot more. Just the nature of our schedule – court appearances, home visits, meetings, etc. I am not always in the office when my offenders come in to be drug tested, so I have to rely on other officers a lot.

It [SMART program] places a burden on other officers with random drug testing and things that I am not always in the office for. Other people have to be more involved in my caseload than they would otherwise.

For attorneys (35%), the SMART program had resulted in increased time in court and in the office because of the new violations and arrests. In addition, there was some unpredictability in the court hearings, which caused scheduling conflicts and lack of ability to cover duties needed by other clients.

While not mentioned by the majority, there were some other noteworthy discussions on problems/barriers with programmatic set-up/implementation. Geography (23%) was discussed by participants as this created difficulties with meeting all obligations when covering large geographic areas and multiple counties (i.e., court hearings, drug testing, and supervision). In addition, geography was noted to be a barrier for SMART participants, particularly if they did not have transportation or access to public transportation and resided in the more rural regions of Kentucky. Finally, somewhat related to other concerns, issues of future growth/maintenance (23%) were discussed. Participants discussed the costs associated with the program in terms of hiring additional probation officers and attorneys if the program continues to grow.

3.1.2.2. Limitations and restrictions in opportunities. Inherently, for those mentioning barriers, there were discussions about limited resources and treatment referral options (46%; i.e., lengthy waiting lists or very few referral agencies in a particular jurisdiction) to meet probationers' needs. Of the individuals discussing limited opportunities, 63% focused on external resources, such as difficulties with service of warrants, not having enough treatment options, and treatment providers not having enough space. One judge explained:

One of the key components of that program (HOPE) was law enforcement buy in, that basically when a judge issues a bench warrant for somebody that didn't show up that the service of those warrants be expedited. We don't yet have consistency with that component in our program, and that's not a criticism of our system, it's simply a recognition that with the limited resources that we have. They don't really have any way to prioritize the service of this bench warrant versus the 100's that are otherwise coming out, and we compensate for that by ultimately by me being more available to the officer.

Among those discussing limitations in opportunities, 53% mentioned limitations in internal resources, specifically focusing on the space available in the SMART program to serve active probationers. Process evaluation participants noted that because of this, some high risk/high needs clients who would have benefitted from the program were unable to participate. One attorney stated:

I would like to be able to see everyone that we see come through the court system have this opportunity, and unfortunately, it is just not feasible for one judge and probation officer being able to handle the volume that it would require if everyone had the opportunity to be a part of the program.

3.1.2.3. Communication. Limited or lack of communication between various community criminal justice agencies about the SMART program was identified as a barrier by a little less than one-fifth of the respondents (17%). While this theme was not mentioned by the majority, it seemed important to note that several vested partners wanted to continue to work on eliminating communication barriers and continue discussing/collaborating on program requirements, changes, structure, and sanctions.

3.1.2.4. Morale. Several process evaluation participants (17%) mentioned barriers to the program related to victim and law enforcement/corrections morale. Specifically, attorneys (23%) and law enforcement/corrections (11%) noted that because victims follow cases very closely, some frustration was expressed when an offender received enhanced probation for crimes committed. This often left the victim feeling as if the defendant was not being held accountable. One attorney illustrated this point:

It [SMART program] has made our job difficult for two reasons. It creates a problem with victims. Some victims are vigilant and follow a defendant's case closely. Giving offenders enhanced probation makes them feel like offenders are not being held accountable. Two, it affects law enforcement morale. Offenders just keep getting probation, there are no real consequences. Law enforcement officials look to the prosecutors and say, "Isn't there anything you can do?" It affects our relationship with both law enforcement and victims. The government is so concerned about defendants; nobody ever cares about the victims.

3.1.3. Future suggestions/recommendations for change

A significant majority (90%) of process evaluation participants had future suggestions and recommendations for change. Specifically, recommendations for change identified in the process evaluation were classified into three categories: (1) programmatic improvements; (2) education; and, (3) communication.

3.1.3.1. Programmatic improvements. The majority (60%) of process evaluation participants who discussed future suggestions and/or recommendations focused on program implementation and requirements. However, the recommendations for change were extremely varied; the most commonly mentioned was the need for staffing-related changes (24%). There were several specific suggestions related to staffing. One suggestion was to hire additional SMART probation officers in the future to allow for home/work visits. One judge explained:

I would like to see an additional probation officer assigned because it is again an intensive case load, supervision caseload. I think the additional benefit an additional officer would allow us is to ensure the defendants are where they're supposed to be such as they are at work when they say they are at work, when they're actually at community service when they're supposed to

be doing community service. Again, it's that intensive supervision which really makes the difference in the program.

Another staffing suggestion was to house SMART probation officers and/or supervisors in one centralized location. The latter suggestion would allow one drug-testing and reporting location in each jurisdiction. A final staffing related suggestion was to have one or a few designated SMART probation officers to work with SMART participants in order to promote consistency and facilitate communication. One law enforcement/corrections participant stated:

It would be nice if we could have something centralized in location for the program. The officers being split up is a little bit of a detriment. They are not as consistent as they could be if they were all under one supervisor as before.

The next most common suggestion was to utilize a phase and rewards system (21%). One judge explained:

I think rewards are good. And that might be something to address because I am not really doing that from my perspective with the participants that are succeeding in the program.

Participants suggested utilizing a phase system (where the drug testing and supervision decreased with programmatic progression) as a reward for probationers moving through the program. This would also allow the probation officer more time to focus on those new to the program and would alleviate some of the supervision demands. Further, law enforcement/corrections had other suggestions for rewards:

They [Probationers] are encouraged about their own progress and about the only reward that we have to offer these high-risk defendants is praise. When they come into the program they are high-risk they get a high level of supervision. As they progress in the program and demonstrate more responsibility then they [should] achieve more freedom and that's the reward.

In terms of other programmatic improvements, 14% (respectively for each theme) emphasized: (1) there needed to be a mechanism in place to deliver immediate, certain consequences when a violation occurs, as this is a key component of the program model; and (2) the importance of having a thoroughly defined acceptance criteria and screening process.

3.1.3.2. Communication. Of those discussing a recommendation, communication was mentioned by a majority (63%) and had two aspects, communication with probationers and also with other key stakeholders. In order to have better communication with the probationers, it was suggested to conduct an orientation or initial meeting with the probationer to discuss the rules, expectations, and sanctions of the program (13%) and have more individualized contact with the judge (10%). The orientation/meeting might make the program appear less overwhelming, further serving a bigger purpose of providing introduction to the judge and setting the probationers on a pathway to success. The other aspect of communication emphasized was the importance of having an open communication climate and free-flowing communication channels between all key stakeholders (23%).

3.1.3.3. Education. Another suggestion/recommendation for change by approximately one-fourth (23%) of the process evaluation participants involved the importance of education. Judges (50%) and law enforcement/corrections (27%) were the primary sub-groups mentioning education as a suggestion for change (only one attorney mentioned this and no administration). Of the participants who discussed education, the overwhelming majority (91%) expressed the desire for more educational training regarding the

SMART program in order to have more knowledge about the program, how it operates in other jurisdictions, and how it was intended to be implemented. This desire for education translated to wanting better communication among all parties. As program understanding increased, the delay time between violations, serving warrants, and sentencing should decrease, increasing efficiency of operations. One law enforcement/corrections personnel demonstrated this point:

I guess just to see what has worked and what hasn't worked in the counties that have already [implemented] and just kind of model them. Hopefully, I think this is kind of a pilot program here, they can learn what has helped, what hasn't. Build on it from there. I would recommend that there is training for anybody that is going to be involved in the SMART Probation program. Learn exactly what it is, what each agency's role is going to be in it, what the expectations are, that way everybody knows about the program, what's expected of them, and what they can do to help it to work collectively.

A secondary theme, for those mentioning education, was the suggestion to develop/offer more educational and treatment options for probationers (64%). Participants discussed how additional funding would allow increased treatment options and the ability to offer employment programs. One judge illustrated this point by saying:

I think we probably need to look at forging partnerships with community agencies. I know that probation and parole has a lot of resources they can tap into, but as far as referring somebody to agencies as far as housing, that is always a big issue, especially in rural areas. That is probably an aspect we could look into strengthening.

3.1.4. Findings: outcome evaluation

3.1.4.1. Descriptives. Table 1 provides an overview of the SMART implementation jurisdictions and the proportion of SMART participants from each site. A little under two-thirds of the probationers were from two SMART sites: Lincoln/Pulaski/Rockcastle (combined jurisdiction; 30.6%) and Jefferson (30.3%). About one-fifth (20.8%) were from Allen/Simpson and one-tenth (9.8%) were from Anderson/Shelby/Spencer. Smaller percentages were from the Pike (7.2%) and Campbell (1.3%) sites. Campbell was the last SMART site added to the project; this site did not begin the project until early 2013. Based on data provided, the average time on probation was 8 months (mean = 7.9 months; data not shown). Further, some descriptors of each jurisdiction are included. SMART jurisdiction of participation was used to code the area as rural or urban based on Beale codes (ERS, 2003; 2007). Population estimates are also included from the [United States Census \(2010\)](#). Finally, reported drug and assault offenses for each SMART jurisdiction were retrieved from the 2012 Crime in Kentucky Annual Report ([KSP, 2012](#)).

3.1.4.2. LS/CMI. LS/CMI raw score information for subscales as well as the total score are presented in Table 2. Based on the between group comparisons, the SMART probationers were rated as significantly higher on all domains measured by the LS/CMI with the exception of the criminal history domain.

3.1.4.3. Drug screening. Random drug screening is a critical component of SMART; these data are shown in Table 3. The SMART probationers were drug tested 2529 times; of these, there were 218 positive drug screens (data not shown in table), which equates to approximately 8.6% of the total screens. In contrast, the comparison probationers were only drug tested 1149 times; of

Table 2
LS/CMI raw score information.

	SMART (N = 307)	COMPARISON (N = 300)	df	t-Value
Criminal History (CH)	2.1 (SD = 2.3)	1.5 (SD = 2.2)	605	-3.2
Education and Employment (EE)	2.3 (SD = 2.8)	1.5 (SD = 2.4)	605	-3.9 ^{***}
Family and Marital (FM)	.68 (SD = 1.0)	.45 (SD = .89)	605	-2.9 ^{***}
Leisure and Recreation (LR)	.75 (SD = .91)	.46 (SD = .79)	605	-4.3 ^{***}
Companions (CO)	1.2 (SD = 1.4)	.73 (SD = 1.3)	605	-3.8 ^{**}
Alcohol and Drug Problems (ADP)	2.1 (SD = 2.5)	1.2 (SD = 2.1)	605	-4.7 ^{***}
Pro-criminal Attitude (PA)	.34 (SD = .84)	.21 (SD = .71)	605	-2.0 ^{***}
Antisocial Pattern (AP)	.48 (SD = .83)	.30 (SD = .67)	605	-2.9 ^{***}
Total	9.9 (SD = 9.9)	6.3 (SD = 8.8)	605	-4.7 ^{**}

^{**} $p < .01$.^{***} $p < .001$.**Table 3**
Drug screening.

	SMART (N = 307)	COMPARISON (N = 300)	df	Test Statistic
% of positive tests ^{**}	8.6%	29.4%	1	16.31 ^{***}
Average number of positive drug screens	0.6 (SD = 1.4)	1.1 (SD = 2.3)	667	13.4 ^{***}
Marijuana	29.0%	48.7%	1	8.8 ^{**}
Benzodiazepines	20.0%	18.5%		
Cocaine	14.0%	17.6%		
Oxycodone	14.0%	4.2%	1	6.6 ^{**}
Methamphetamine	10.0%	10.1%		
Alcohol	7.0%	10.9%		
Amphetamine	3.0%	5.9%		
Methadone	3.0%	1.7%		
Suboxone	4.0%	0.8%		
Morphine	2.0%	0.0%		
Crack	0.0%	2.5%		

^{**} $p < .01$.^{***} $p < .001$.

these, there were 338 positive drug screens (data not shown in table), which equates to approximately 29.4% of the total screens. There were significantly more positive drug screens for the comparison group. Further, as shown in Table 3, there were significantly more positive drug screens, on average, for the comparison probationers (mean = 1.1) compared with the SMART probationers (mean = 0.6). More specifically, there were significantly more comparison probationers with positive drug screens for marijuana (48.7% vs. 29.0%) while more SMART probationers tested positive for Oxycodone (14.0% vs. 4.2%).

3.1.4.4. Program violations. Program violations, as reported in KOMS, are listed in Table 4. Detailed descriptions of the program violation categories are also included. In general, the comparison group had a significantly higher average number of violations (2.3) compared to the SMART probationers (1.2). Upon examination, there were also significant between group differences on the types of program violations. Almost one-third of probationers in the comparison group (32.7%) had a substance use violation compared to 24.0% for the SMART probationers. Further, a significantly greater number of comparison probationers had probation

Table 4
Violations.

	SMART (N = 307)	COMPARISON (N = 300)	df	Test statistic
Average number of violations	2.3	1.2	605	23.6 ^{***}
Substance use (i.e., testing positive for alcohol and/or any illegal/illicit substance as well as drug possession charges)	24.0%	32.7%	1	5.6 [*]
Probation (i.e., absconding, changing address and/or failure to report change without approval, failure to report arrest, citation, and/or summons, failure to report to probation officer, falsifying report, and leaving area of supervision without permission)	21.2%	29.7%	1	5.9 [*]
New charges (i.e., new felony arrest, misdemeanor, and receiving a misdemeanor conviction for carrying a concealed deadly weapon)	10.6%	33.0%	1	45.5 ^{***}
Substance abuse treatment (i.e., failure to attend AA, failure to complete treatment, failure to pay for drug testing, failure to provide verification of meeting attendance, failure to seek evaluation and follow all treatment recommendations, and failure to submit to drug testing)	8.0%	10.7%		
Fees and services (i.e., failure to complete community service, failure to make restitution as directed, and failure to pay supervision fee as directed)	3.5%	8.7%	1	7.1 ^{**}
Other treatment requirements (i.e., failure to complete treatment for violent offenders, failure to comply with any medical or mental health treatment, and failure to provide verification of attendance to GED classes)	1.9%	.7%		
Other (i.e., those coded with this classification by the probation officer)	0%	.3%		

^{*} $p < .05$.^{**} $p < .01$.^{***} $p < .001$.

violations (29.7%) compared to the SMART probationers (21.2%). Additionally, a significantly higher percentage of comparison probationers had new charges (33.0% vs. 10.6%). Finally, there was a significant difference between the percentage of probationers in the comparison group (8.7%) and the SMART probationers (3.5%) that had fees and services violations.

3.1.4.5. Alterations of sentencing & incarceration cost. Alterations of sentencing were measured through incarceration (i.e., jail) time. While a significantly greater percentage of SMART probationers (15.1%) were moved into an incarceration placement compared to the comparison group (9.3%; $\chi^2 = 4.671$; $p < .05$ – data not shown in a table), probationers in the comparison group spent a significantly greater average time incarcerated (96.39 days for the comparison group vs. 27.38 days for the SMART probationers; $t = 2.737$; $p < .01$). These days of incarceration can be translated into tangible costs based on the DOC estimate for cost of incarceration per day (\$31.34). For the SMART probationers total incarceration cost was \$40,334.60, which equals \$858.18 per person. For the comparison probationers, total incarceration cost was \$84,587.70 or \$3020.95 per person. The per person incarceration cost was significantly lower for the SMART probationers ($t = 7.489$, $p < .01$). These findings match the scope of the SMART project, using short-term incarceration as a response to a program violation and also suggest cost-savings associated with days institutionalized.

4. Discussion

Qualitative data for this study was collected via process evaluation interviews which examined program implementation from multiple key stakeholder perspectives. The analysis of quantitative secondary KOMS data provided a preliminary examination of outcomes associated with the SMART program. To the best of our knowledge, this research is unique contextually, based on the application of a relatively new enhanced probation model (HOPE) implemented in a predominantly rural state.

Both the process and outcome data show promising findings regarding the SMART program. Process evaluation data highlighted several key findings related to SMART program implementation, which were: (1) improvements to the overall probation system, (2) increased interpersonal communication/collaboration between key stakeholders, and (3) enhanced responsibility and accountability for probationers to address their identified needs/barriers to success. Outcomes data show the positives associated with implementing enhanced SMART probation for high-risk/high-needs offenders via program effectiveness. Two critical implications emerged: (1) random drug screening is a deterrent for continued substance use; and, (2) the promise of certain consequences promotes programmatic compliance.

Study results show success of the SMART program via improvements to the probation system and increased interpersonal communication and collaboration. System-level improvements are a result of the interdependent actions and interactions of correction officers, attorneys, probation officers, administrators, and judges, as well as the interrelated organizational communication (structure). Synergistic success is possible only because of the collective effort of everyone working together toward a common goal. In turn, and in time, the results of the whole system can become more than the individual sum of its parts (Conrad & Poole, 2005). Therefore, it must be highlighted that there is no single cause for success of the SMART program – each and every aspect of the program is interdependently linked.

Process evaluation data also suggested that SMART probationers are accepting increased responsibility and becoming more

'self-guided' and accountable for behavior. Experts within the field of Criminal Justice emphasize the importance of consistently applying rules, as well as ensuring offenders understand those rules in order to modify undesirable behavior (Inciardi, Martin, Butzin, Hooper, & Harrison, 1997). By accepting responsibility and being involved in their supervision process, they feel vested buy-in because they feel more involved and in control of their outcome (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999).

Results from the outcome evaluation are consistent with existing research; supporting that programs which focus on the certainty of sanctions are more effective than programs which focus strictly on severity of sanctions (Harrell & Roman, 2001). Previous evaluation studies of intensified supervision programs which focused only on additional monitoring and more sanctions actually violated people at an increased rate because of more illicit behavior being detected; therefore, resulting in more revocations (Petersilla & Turner, 1993; Taxman, 2002). Conversely, later studies of community supervision programs which implemented certain but graduated sanctions have shown overall improvement in probationers' compliance and many programs have adopted random drug testing to facilitate increased supervision, as well as to monitor compliance with drug treatment (Harrell & Kleiman, 2000). Additionally, Caputo (2004) showed that random drug testing in conjunction with substance abuse treatment is an even more effective approach.

Hawaii's HOPE program has proven inspirational for examining enhanced probation outcomes (Hawken & Kleiman, 2009). The HOPE model, in many ways, parallels the drug court model, which provides intensive community-based treatment and supervision for individuals involved in the criminal justice system. Further, while the HOPE model is not classified as a drug court, the model does utilize some aspects which are similar to the *Ten Key Components* of drug court including: frequent and random drug testing (Key Component #5), a coordinated strategy is used to monitor compliance (i.e., graduated sanctions and rewards; Key Component #6), and judicial interaction (Key Component # 7); National Association of Drug Court Professionals [NADCP], (1997). However, it is important to note that community corrections and drug court serves different populations, individuals eligible for probation may or may not meet the criteria set forth by drug court which in many cases includes a non-violent offense and past criminal history. Further, all of the *Ten Key Components* should be incorporated in a drug court program (NADCP, 1997). Drug courts have been around for over 25 years and data consistently shows support for decreased substance abuse and illicit behavior both during and after the program (Belenko, 2001; Gottfredson, Najaka, & Kearley, 2003; Huddleston & Marlowe, 2011; Kalich & Evans, 2006; Mitchell, Wilson, Eggers, & MacKenzie, 2012; Sanford & Arrigo, 2005; Shaffer, 2011). Thus, the emphasis for the HOPE model extends beyond active probation to the need for ongoing deterrence post-probation; future research will need to examine this issue.

4.1. Practice and policy implications

Preliminary findings from this enhanced probation program suggest the critical deterrent effect of randomized drug testing. Specifically, even though the SMART probationers were tested at over twice the rate of the comparison group, the SMART probationers had only 8.6% positive tests while the comparison group had a positive rate over three times as high (29.4%). This has important implications for practice. Many community corrections districts may be struggling with tightening budgets, unable to afford enhanced and/or more frequent drug tests. One suggestion would be to simply randomize the existing testing schedule. Rather than having a probationer test on a specific date each

month, randomizing the schedule may increase accountability and decrease positive drug screens. From a policy standpoint, these findings also have important implications. There has been much criticism of traditional probation, with critics stating there is no accountability because the prospect of consequences is only a distal possibility (Kleiman & Hawken, 2008). This enhanced probation program attempts to alter this criticism by offering certain consequences. As with randomizing drug testing, this can be accomplished with little funding. Jurisdictions can consider standardizing sanctions for probation violations, letting probationers know with certainty what punishment will accompany a violation. Further, by ensuring swiftness of the response to the violation, some of the power to issue sanctions could be transferred to probation officers and partnerships could be developed with other law enforcement agencies to ensure swiftness of service for warrants/arrests.

4.2. Study limitations

The evaluation of the SMART pilot project had noteworthy accomplishments in terms of the data offered on program implementation as well as the preliminary examination of probationer's outcomes. Both data sources offered valuable insights into programmatic strengths, areas for improvements, and implications for future practice and research. However, this evaluation is not without limitations. First, the quasi-experimental design utilizing a non-equivalent comparison group has limitations in terms of internal validity. A randomized controlled trial would offer more ability to determine the SMART intervention as the true mechanism for differences between probationers. Further, the selection of the non-equivalent comparison group warrants discussion in terms of the selection bias. While the comparison group was selected based on defined criteria to resemble the SMART probationers, these individuals could not be perfectly matched on specific criteria such as age, race, education, and criminal history. The ability to add more characteristics to the selection of the comparison group would increase confidence that the two groups were comparable on important characteristics. Second, the outcome evaluation solely relied on secondary data collected by probation officers and stored in KOMS. This limits the evaluation to only examining and comparing outcomes on the data collected as part of the daily routine. The quality of the evaluation is solely dependent on the data which is input into KOMS. Further, this data was de-identified prior to being sent to the Evaluator. As a result, there is important data and descriptors which were not available (i.e., age, gender, criminal history, etc.), which could have added richness and quality to describing the probationers. Further, the inclusion of additional data on characteristics of the participants would allow for a better description of the sample as well as the necessary data for more sophisticated data analyses. Third, in terms of the qualitative data, one concern is about social desirability. Participants in the process evaluation were interviewed face-to-face about perceptions of this newly implemented program. Thus, data may have been biased by the interviewers' presence as well as the participants' desire to be viewed in a positive light. Finally, there is a need for post-program follow-up data to examine why some do not successfully complete the program, as well as examining indicators for success for those who do complete the program. Further research will facilitate understanding longer-term outcomes and future recidivism.

4.3. Lessons learned

While the current study offered important preliminary data on the implementation and effectiveness of the SMART program, lessons learned primarily focus on additional data which would

have proven valuable to the evaluation. Due to limited funding, the outcome evaluation relied solely on the use of secondary data collected from KOMS. Ideally, the evaluation would have the ability to supplement the existing data with face-to-face interviews to obtain a better understanding from probationers' perspectives regarding what is and is not working well. Additionally, these interviews could supplement the outcomes data by asking probationers to self-report on some of the primary outcomes of interest (i.e., substance use, treatment linkage). In future evaluations, even if the funding remains restricted, it would be beneficial to have input into ways the secondary data can be shaped to collect other needed information specifically on the swiftness of the response to a violation, as this is critical to the HOPE/SMART models. Also, for future evaluations, an improvement would be building in the ability to gather data for a cost-analysis. Given the novel nature of this pilot project, as well as the intensity of the supervision, services, and drug-testing, it would be interesting to look at the cost of the program and compare this with cost-savings (i.e., avoided costs). This type of analysis might be conducted in the future, after the SMART program has been implemented for several years. Finally, an important lesson is related to post-program outcomes for SMART probationers vs. those on traditional probation. While this type of longitudinal data collection was not possible with given funding, if programs like SMART continue, there will be the need to follow these participants in future years to examine long-term outcomes, specifically recidivism. This type of examination could be accomplished via secondary data sources from the DOC (i.e., jail/prison incarcerations) and the AOC (i.e., criminal history – arrests, charges, and convictions).

4.4. Conclusion

Today, enhanced probation programs offer promising results. Kleiman and Hawken (2008) discussed the difficulties of inter-agency collaboration to make an enhanced probation program such as this work. However, this paper provides evidence that when such collaboration takes place, both the system and probationers benefit. The hope is that enhanced probation programs, such as SMART, will continue to be piloted and will be the focus of continued empirical research.

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Appendix 1. Process evaluation interview questions

- How was the grant envisioned to enhance existing services at your agency?

- What are the major changes in programming since the new grant was implemented?
- Please indicate how you believe your office and/or community has been impacted by the SMART program.
- Please describe your collaboration with partner agency(ies) as part of this grant.
- Please describe the most compelling reason(s) you believe for implementing a SMART probation program in your community.
- What are the major accomplishments of the program as related to the grant?
- Please list at least three of the most significant benefits your agency has received as a result of the SMART program.
- Please list at least three strengths of the SMART program.
- Name at least one problem, barrier, or other issue the program has encountered with implementation of the new grant and how your team has worked through it?
- Please list at least three things the SMART program could do to improve.
- What advice would you give to counterpart agencies in other jurisdictions beginning SMART programs?
- What recommendations/suggestions would you have for programmatic changes to the way the SMART program operates in Kentucky?
- Are there any services not currently offered by the SMART program that you would like to see offered in the future?

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