



State Authorized Risk Assessment Tools for Sex Offenders Review Committee

January 25, 2017

To: Assembly Rules Committee

From: SARATSO Review Committee

Re: Annual Report of the SARATSO Committee

In 2010, the Speaker of the Assembly awarded \$250,000 to the SARATSO (State Authorized Risk Assessment Tools for Sex Offenders) Review Committee for use in adopting and implementing evidence-based sex offender risk assessment tools in California. On June 2, 2010, an Interagency Agreement was signed by the Assembly Rules Committee and the SARATSO Committee regarding use of the funds. A special deposit fund was established in 2011 under the auspices of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to administer the fund at the direction of the SARATSO Committee.

In 2016, the SARATSO Committee and the California Department of Justice continued their partnership sponsoring evidence-based research on sexual recidivism in California. A government report on the validation study of the Static-99R, California's static risk assessment instrument, was posted online. The study demonstrated that the instrument remains a valuable tool for assessing risk of sexual re-offense in California. (See Lee, S., The Predictive Validity of Static-99R for Sexual Offenders in California: 2016 Update, online at www.saratso.org). The 2016 study updated a 2014 research study which showed a strong correlation between Static-99R scores and sexual recidivism by California offenders. (Hanson, R. K., et al., The Field Validity of Static-99R Sex Offender Risk Assessment Tool in California, 1 J. of Threat Assessment and Management, no. 2, at 102-117 (2014).) Both studies confirmed that the Static-99R is working very well as a predictive tool on the diverse ethnic and cultural population of sex offenders registered in California. The 2014 study will be updated in 2017 to determine re-offense rates of offenders after 10 years.

The SARATSO Committee sponsored 20 statewide trainings in 2016 on the state's four official risk assessment instruments: Static-99R (static risk factors/male offenders); STABLE-2007/ACUTE-2007 (dynamic risk assessment factors/male offenders); Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (future violence risk/male and female offenders); and JSORRAT-II (static risk factors/juvenile offenders). SARATSO retains experts in the field to train California probation officers, parole agents and treatment providers on use of these instruments. In turn, SARATSO certifies trainers who then provide training for scorers in California.

Thanks to the special deposit funds, the SARATSO Committee is able to sponsor a yearly meeting of all the certified trainers on each risk instrument to discuss recent research and curriculum development. The authors of three of the state's risk instruments, Dr. R. Karl Hanson (Static-99R and STABLE-2007/ACUTE-2007) and Dr. Douglas Epperson (JSORRAT-II) are invited to attend the 2017 certified trainers meeting to provide in-depth guidance to our trainers. Enhanced communication among trainers means consistency in training and better inter-rater reliability among scorers.

One need which cannot be remedied by use of the remaining monies in the special deposit fund is the lack of funding for program accountability and compliance oversight. Every year the SARATSO Committee attempts to determine score submission rates on each risk instrument. Scores are submitted by probation, parole, Department of State Hospitals and treatment programs. However, there is no funding for staff to oversee program accountability, so this remains a challenge which can only be remedied by allocation of at least one more staff position. The SARATSO Committee would like to conduct in-person visits for more effective review of stakeholders charged with scoring and submitting risk assessment scores.

The special deposit fund also enabled the SARATSO Committee to fund a video project in 2016. Static-99R expert Dr. Amy Phenix was videotaped training the certified trainers on the 2016 revised Coding Rules for the instrument. The video was intended for use in training scorers statewide. The special deposit fund also paid for the redesign of the SARATSO web site in 2016, to make it more functional for scorers, trainers and the general public who use it.

The combined budget of the SARATSO Committee and the California Sex Offender Management Board is \$200,000 per year. It is impossible for the SARATSO Committee to fully and effectively carry out its mission on this budget. As a result, we rely on the Special Deposit Fund to make up the difference. We are proud of the system we have established for empirical risk assessment in California, which was enabled in no small part by this Committee's grant of funds. The SARATSO Committee remains very grateful for the grant.

Sincerely,



Janet Neeley
Deputy Attorney General
Chair, SARATSO Committee



cc:

Ken Cooley, Chair, Assembly Rules Committee

Jordan Cunningham, Vice-Chair, Assembly Rules Committee

Debra Gravert, Chief Administrative Officer, Assembly Rules Committee

Reginald B. Jones-Sawyer Sr., Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee

Tom Lackey, Vice-Chair, Assembly Public Safety Committee

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Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the House

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