



Case Contact Compliance and Implementation of New Programs *Department of Juvenile Justice, Commonwealth of Virginia*

Monitoring case contact compliance in an after-care or probation/parole population is often difficult for social services organizations to manage. Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (VADJJ) workers can be required to make as many as seven contacts per month for each open case. After a contact is made, all pertinent information is recorded in Virginia’s Juvenile Tracking System (JTS) database.

To assist staff in monitoring contact compliance and other service standards, VADJJ subscribed to SafeMeasures®, a product of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD). SafeMeasures is a web-based reporting service that analyzes social service data such as JTS and publishes performance metrics on a secure website. All reports and metrics can be broken down by court service unit, county, supervisory unit, and worker caseload to identify case compliance status on various measures. All reports are refreshed twice weekly and are available online to any VADJJ worker, unit supervisor, and administrator within one to two days of entry into JTS. Simple presentation of timely and actionable information is the goal of SafeMeasures.

NCCD created several SafeMeasures reports that allowed staff to monitor contact status more effectively. The most complex contact requirements for VADJJ staff are for parole cases. For example, a client younger than 18 with a status of Level 4 Parole must receive five face-to-face contacts per month with a worker (two of which must be out-of-office). That worker must also make two face-to-face contacts per month with the client’s parent/guardian. It is easy to imagine the difficulty a worker might have managing these contacts for multiple clients. Before the implementation of SafeMeasures, VADJJ never exceeded 60% contact compliance.

A few months after VADJJ started using SafeMeasures, contact compliance for parole cases began to improve. Figure 1 shows the contact compliance rate for all open parole cases for three quarters before and ten quarters after SafeMeasures implementation. Beginning in October 2004 and continuing through March 2007, we see a significant and sustained increase in contact compliance.¹

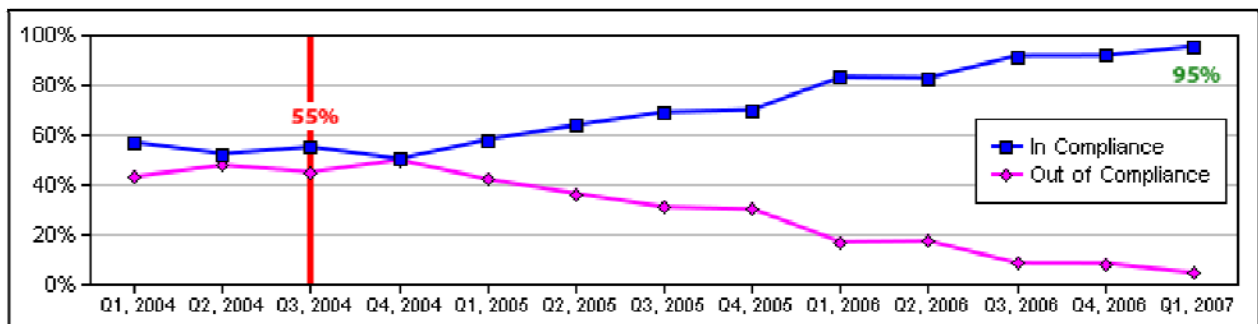


Figure 1. Contact Compliance for Open Parole Cases – Percent View

Prior to the implementation of SafeMeasures (the third quarter of 2004), contact compliance historically hovered around 55%. Since then, compliance increased steadily to approximately 95% by the first quarter of 2007.

¹ Cases open during the last month of each quarter.

Less dramatic but similar results were seen with probation case contacts (Figure 2) and direct care/halfway house (DCHH) cases (Figure 3). The contact requirements for probation and DCHH cases are less frequent and less complex than parole case contact requirements, so it is not surprising that pre-SafeMeasures compliance rates for these populations were higher than the parole population (approximately 85% for probation and approximately 89% for DCHH populations). From the inception of SafeMeasures onward, compliance rates for these populations increased steadily to 97% for probation and to 99% for the DCHH population.

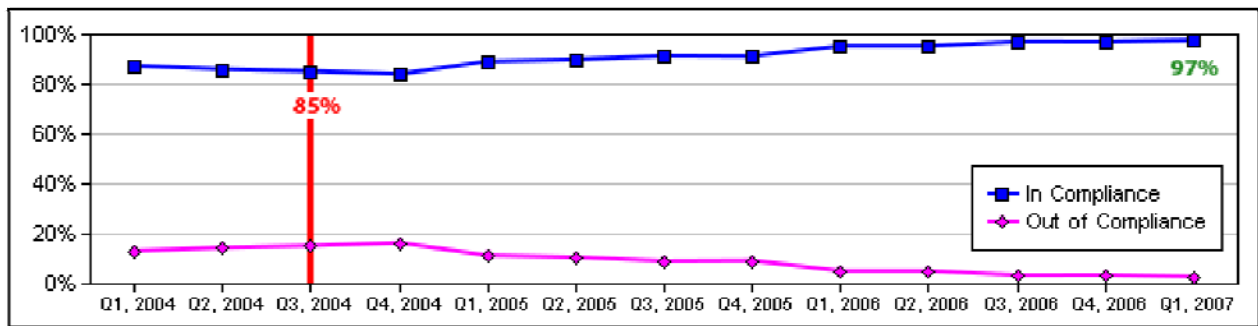


Figure 2. Contact Compliance for Open Probation Cases – Percent View

Contact compliance increased from 85% to 97% during the two and a half years since the implementation of VADJJ SafeMeasures (vertical bar).

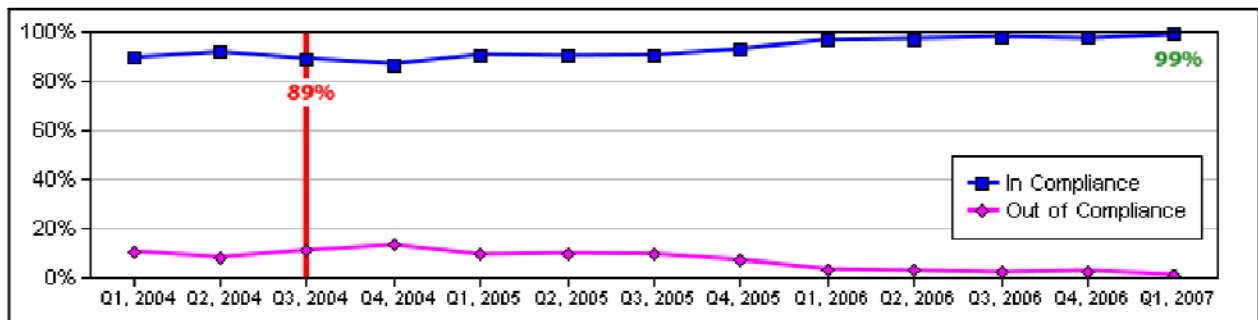


Figure 3. Contact Compliance for DCHH Cases – Percent View

Contact compliance increased from 89% to 99% since the implementation of VADJJ SafeMeasures (vertical bar).

A probation or parole initiative is only worthwhile if it meets some stated objective, whether it is reduced recidivism, increased public safety, or greater cost efficiency. A common error in evaluating new programs is to assess impact without first adequately assessing implementation. SafeMeasures is a powerful tool for monitoring program implementation.

Shortly after the SafeMeasures subscription started, VADJJ began to place clients in a new contact-requiring status called “residential placement.” Figure 4 shows the total number of clients in the new residential placement status and breaks them out by the number of clients who were in compliance with the required contact schedule and the number of clients who were out of compliance. As VADJJ began placing clients in this new status, the number of clients who were in compliance increased steadily over the two and a half years after the implementation of VADJJ SafeMeasures, while the number of clients who were not in compliance remained low.

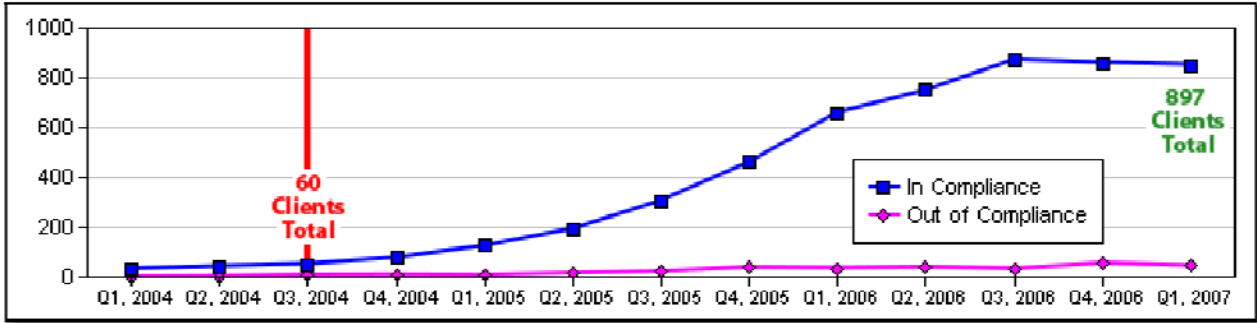


Figure 4. Contact Compliance for Residential Placement/Other Probation Cases – Numbers View
Implementation of a new case status.

SafeMeasures allows a user to easily toggle between client counts and compliance rates. Figure 5 shows the same information as above as percent compliance over time. The percent view shows that contact compliance for the new status with novel contact requirements was consistently high for the entire rollout of the new status/contact standards.

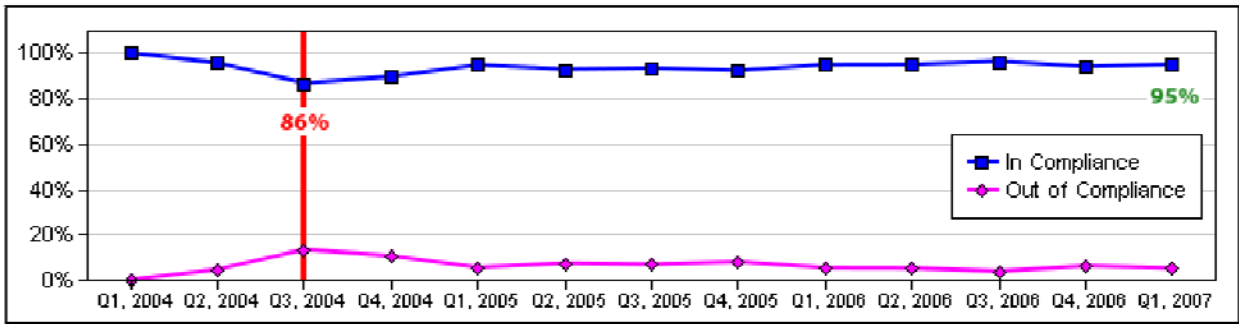


Figure 5. Contact Compliance for Residential Placement/Other Probation Cases – Percent View
Contact compliance remained high (approximately 86% to approximately 95%) while the non-compliance stayed low over the life of the new status. The implementation of VADJJ SafeMeasures is denoted by the vertical bar.

These data indicate that SafeMeasures can be an effective tool for monitoring contact compliance and improving compliance rates. For some measures, the improvement was dramatic; for other measures, good compliance became excellent compliance. Most importantly, it suggests that data-driven management can have a substantial and measurable impact on both practice and the data documenting practice. This means that VADJJ can confidently rely upon the accuracy and timeliness of its data—a fundamental prerequisite for program and policy analysis.