



Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia

Office of Legislative, Intergovernmental and Public Affairs

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CSOSA OPENING NEW DRUG TESTING LABORATORY

The Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia (CSOSA) announces the official opening of its new Drug Testing Laboratory at 300 Indiana Avenue, N.W., Washington D.C. The laboratory's opening ceremony is at 10:00 a.m. on February 7, 2000, hosted by the agency Trustee, John A. Carver. Attendees at the ceremony include major supporters of the new facility from Congress, the Judiciary and the District. The Laboratory is expected to have a major impact in the monitoring, treatment and sanctioning of the offender population under CSOSA's supervision.

Approximately 65,000 people in the District of Columbia are currently in need of drug treatment services. Many of these individuals are concentrated in the criminal justice system. More than 75% of criminal offenders have a history of substance abuse and their addiction to drugs fuels their patterns of crime. "With the opening today of a new, high speed, fully-automated drug testing laboratory we have taken a major step in our strategy to break the cycle between drugs and crime," said Jay Carver, Trustee of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency. He explains, "The first step is to make sure we know whom among those we supervise is using drugs. This new facility will permit us to test parolees and probationers on a regular basis. The second step is to ensure that we have treatment for those identified. The third and final step is to exert real criminal justice pressure on those mandated by the Court or the U.S. Parole Commission to remain drug free. Ability to conduct frequent drug tests, coupled with real pressure to remain in treatment, is essential. We know from our experience with Drug Court that we can have a significant impact on drug use and crime when we apply this common sense formula."

The new laboratory will be managed by the D.C. Pretrial Services Agency, a component of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency that has been in the forefront of drug testing pretrial defendants since 1984. Susan Shaffer, Director of Pretrial Services, stated, "This new laboratory reflects a collaborative effort between the city and the federal government, and also reflects the new seamless coordination between pretrial, probation and parole supervision components. Such an extensive joint effort by key criminal justice stakeholders is bound to make a critical difference in our success in dealing with the problems of substance abuse in our city."

Confirmed Attendees, Congressman Ernest J. Istook, The Honorable Annice M. Wagner, The Honorable Eugene N. Hamilton, The Honorable Harold Brazil, The Honorable Erik Christian, D.C. Chief of Police Charles Ramsey, Department of Corrections, Director, Mr. Odie Washington.

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