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Editorial Note: Inclusion of practitioner initiatives or research summaries in this newsletter does not imply endorsement by NAPE. These features are intended to highlight emerging practices, local innovations, and relevant scholarship that probation leaders may wish to explore as part of their own professional judgment and organizational context.

SECTION 1

Probation on the Move: How Chief Tamika Nelson's Team Is Redefining Community-Centered Support



San Diego County Probation's Mobile Probation Service Center brings services directly into the community.

San Diego County Probation, led by Chief Probation Officer Tamika Nelson, is charting a bold new path in community supervision—one that brings services directly to the people who need them most. The department's new Mobile Probation Service Centers (MPSCs) are transforming how probation connects with clients, families, and neighborhoods by removing barriers that often stand between individuals and the support that helps them succeed.

The MPSCs are fully equipped offices on wheels—large vehicles staffed by probation officers and partner agencies. Their mission is simple but powerful: meet clients where they are. For individuals facing transportation challenges, limited awareness of available services, or competing life demands, these mobile centers eliminate the distance—literally and figuratively—between need and support.

Inside and around the mobile units, staff provide on-site assessments and immediate connections to critical services, including:

- Housing support
- Medi-Cal enrollment
- Substance use treatment
- Mental health care
- Education and employment pathways
- Court-related programs

Partner agencies join the MPSCs in the field, offering services that clients might otherwise struggle to access. This collaborative, neighborhood-based model strengthens trust, reduces stress, and helps clients stabilize more quickly.

“Raising the Bar in Service.”

Beyond formal services, officers and staff distribute food, hygiene kits, and clothing—available to anyone in the community. This approach recognizes that stability begins with meeting basic needs and that probation’s role extends beyond supervision to genuine community care.

Chief Nelson describes the initiative as “raising the bar in service”—a commitment reflected in every aspect of the program. By shifting from a traditional office-based model to a mobile, community-embedded strategy, her department is demonstrating what modern probation leadership looks like: responsive, innovative, and deeply human-centered.

The MPSCs were funded through a Board of State and Community Corrections grant, underscoring statewide confidence in San Diego County Probation’s forward-thinking approach.

At its core, the initiative supports the department’s mission to protect public safety by helping clients restore their lives, families, and communities. When individuals can access treatment, secure housing, find employment, and meet court obligations, they are far more likely to succeed—and communities become stronger as a result.

For more information, please contact Chief Nelson at psg.probaton@sdcounty.ca.gov.

SECTION 2

President's Message

"Elevating the profession by strengthening executive leadership, amplifying practitioner voice, and collaboratively shaping the future of probation."



Serving as President of the National Association of Probation Executives is both an honor and a responsibility I deeply appreciate. Walking into my first Board meeting, I felt the same mix of emotions many leaders experience when taking on a new challenge—gratitude, excitement, and a healthy respect for the work ahead.

I'm excited to share that our Board began its work by focusing on the future of NAPE. We reaffirmed our commitment to transparency by opening future Board meetings to our membership and established four strategic priorities that will guide our efforts: building a stronger practitioner-led community, advancing responsible innovation and technology, making evidence more accessible to leaders, and developing the next generation of probation executives.

These priorities reflect our belief that the future of probation will be shaped by practitioners working together, learning from one another, and leading with integrity, innovation, and evidence.

To turn these priorities into action, we also created several ad hoc committees that will provide members with new opportunities to contribute their expertise and help move our profession forward. I encourage you to get involved. NAPE is strongest when its members actively shape its direction.

Thank you for the trust you place in this organization and in its leadership. I am excited about what we will accomplish together and look forward to building the future of probation leadership alongside each of you.

Charles Robinson

President, National Association of Probation Executives

SECTION 3

Harnessing AI in Community Supervision: A Three-Pronged Force Multiplier

By Allen Bell — Southern Regional Representative, NAPE • Agency Director, Midland Community Supervision and Corrections Department, Midland, Texas • allen.bell@midlandcscd.net

Across the nation, community supervision leaders face a complex operational landscape. Whether managing probation, parole, or pretrial services, every agency operates under distinct state mandates, local policies, and specific workflow requirements. Because community supervision skills are largely learned on the job rather than in a classroom, new officers traditionally face a steep, multi-year learning curve before fully mastering department standards. At the same time, even in departments with low turnover, rolling out new mandates, policy shifts, and updated practices across an agency can be a slow and challenging process.

In our department, we have embraced Artificial Intelligence to address these exact challenges. Rather than replacing human judgment, AI serves as a vital tool across three main fronts:

1. **Easing Administrative Demands:** By automating time-consuming paperwork, routine documentation, and case summarization, officers spend less time behind a keyboard and more time in face-to-face coaching.
2. **Accelerating Training & Standard Alignment:** Community supervision looks different from state to state and agency to agency. By feeding our department's specific guidelines and expectations directly into our AI models, officers receive real-time guidance that reinforces correct practices from day one—dramatically shortening the traditional on-the-job learning curve.
3. **Elevating Quality Assurance:** With AI parsing documentation against established operational standards, conducting quality assurance reviews becomes significantly faster, more consistent, and actionable.

To realize these benefits across our entire agency, we integrated specialized AI solutions into both our supervision and clinical operations.

Supervision & Case Management

On the supervision side, our probation officers utilize CaseBase, an AI-driven platform tailored for community supervision workflows. Rather than replacing officer judgment, the technology acts as a powerful analytical assistant during and after office visits.

Key applications in our daily operations include:

- **Audio Recording & Custom Summaries:** During office visits, the system records interactions and generates transcripts and case notes formatted precisely to our department's standards, capturing the critical details and key information that matter most to our workflow.
- **Instant Case Synthesis/Summaries:** The platform rapidly ingests, digests, and synthesizes large volumes of historical case data and documents into a clear, high-level overview of the probationer. What used to take officers hours to read and cross-reference is now summarized in minutes.
- **Dynamic Case Planning:** The technology assists officers in building tailored, actionable case plans grounded not only in the probationer's specific risk and need profiles, but also in their overall case history, supervision records, and behavioral patterns over time—synthesizing complex background data into a clear, targeted intervention strategy.

By handling the heavy lifting of notetaking and document analysis, the platform significantly reduces paperwork fatigue, freeing officers to focus on engaging directly with probationers, conducting motivational interviewing, and driving meaningful behavior change.

Treatment & Cognitive Intervention

On the clinical side, our counseling staff incorporates Atlas (developed by The Change Companies), which pairs evidence-based Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT) and Interactive Journaling with an intelligent layer of AI support.

In practice, the platform assists clinicians with session transcription, drafting progress notes, surfacing key participant insights, and flagging early signs of disengagement or risk in real time. For counselors, this minimizes administrative distraction during sessions, allowing them to remain fully present with clients and maintain high fidelity in our cognitive interventions.

Looking Ahead

By pairing specialized AI tools across the supervision and clinical fronts, our goal is simple: to leverage modern technology to strengthen human connection, improve accountability, and drive long-term success for the individuals we serve.

“To leverage modern technology to strengthen human connection, improve accountability, and drive long-term success.”

As leaders in our field, we can integrate these tools responsibly to support our personnel, combat burnout, maintain high operational standards, and enhance public safety.

As your NAPE Southern Regional Representative, I look forward to connecting with fellow members to share insights and discuss how our agencies are navigating this technology. If you are attending the American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) Annual Training Institute in Chicago, I hope to see you at the NAPE Members Reception on Monday, August 17th. It will be a great opportunity to connect in person and swap ideas!

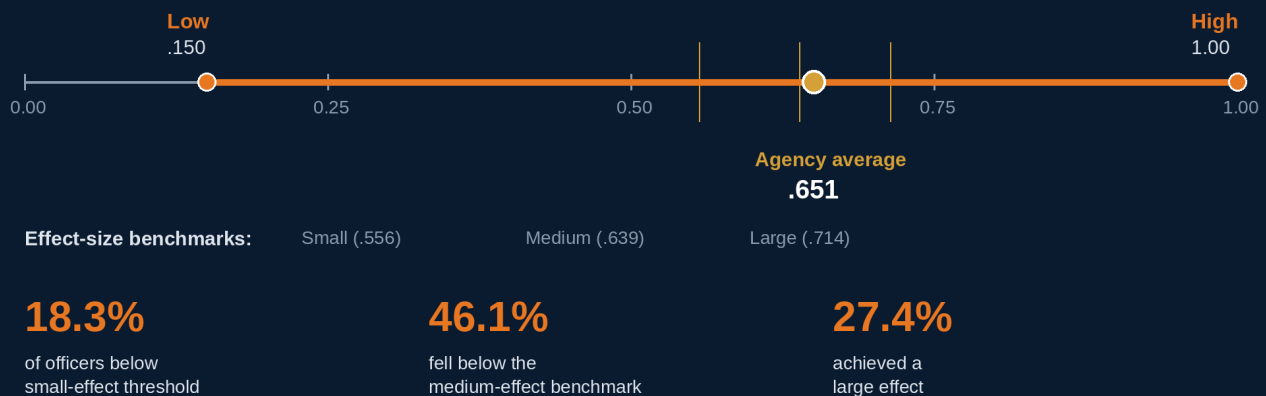
SECTION 4

When “Good” Isn’t: Officer-Level Variability in Risk Assessment Instruments

Christopher T. Lowenkamp, Anthony W. Flores, and Alexander M. Holsinger • Forthcoming, *Federal Probation*

EVIDENCE IN PRACTICE

Officer-level AUC variability across 230 officer-instrument combinations



Lowenkamp, Flores & Holsinger — Forthcoming, *Federal Probation*

The Central Question

Risk assessment instruments are usually validated with a single agency-wide statistic. That approach assumes the tool performs similarly across officers. This study tests that assumption by estimating predictive validity separately for each officer.

Study and Findings

The authors analyzed 245 officer-instrument combinations from two jurisdictions and three post-conviction risk scales; 230 had sufficient outcome variation to calculate AUC, a measure of how well scores distinguish people who do and do not recidivate (.50 = chance). The instruments and jurisdictions are anonymized in the article to protect confidentiality.

The overall average AUC was .651, but officer-level results ranged from .150 to 1.00. Nearly one in five officers (18.3%) failed to reach even a small effect, 46.1% fell below the medium-effect benchmark, and 27.4% achieved a large effect (Rice & Harris, 2005: .556 small, .639 medium, .714 large). Twenty-three officers produced negative score-outcome correlations across 1,099 assessments.

The differences persisted among the 67 officers with at least 100 assessments: AUCs ranged from .413 to .853. Caseload characteristics and assessment volume explained only 5.4% of the variation, and even with instrument controls roughly 90% of the variation remained unexplained. More experience with the tool was unrelated to better performance.

“Agency-wide results can hide important differences.”

What This Means for Leaders

- Agency-wide results can hide important differences. A tool may appear to work reasonably well overall while working very well for some officers and poorly, or even in the wrong direction, for others.
- Labels such as “fair” or “good” can make modest results seem acceptable and discourage leaders from asking whether the tool is working consistently in day-to-day practice.
- Passing a quality-review checklist is not the same as showing that scores predict outcomes. Checklists, scoring reviews, and agreement between raters can show whether procedures are followed consistently, but unless they have been linked to predictive accuracy, they should not be treated as proof that assessments are working.
- More experience with the tool did not produce better results. Poor assessment practices may continue unless agencies identify them and provide focused coaching or additional training.
- The findings do not argue for abandoning structured assessment. They argue for examining results by officer, unit, and supervisor where the data permit; learning from stronger and weaker performers; and checking whether corrective efforts actually improve results.

What the Study Cannot Tell Us — and Cautions

The study found large differences across officers but could not determine what caused them. The data did not include the quality of training, scoring practices, overrides, coaching, or agency quality-review systems. The findings are also limited to post-conviction settings. Before drawing conclusions about any officer, an agency would need enough assessments to produce a stable result and would need to consider differences in caseloads and recidivism rates.

Questions for Leaders

1. Do we know whether our instrument works consistently across officers, units, and supervisors, or only that it works for the agency overall? What data and analytic capacity would we need to answer that question responsibly?
2. Many agencies rely on checklists, scoring reviews, and agreement between raters to judge assessment quality. If these measures have not been shown to relate to officer-level predictive accuracy, what do they actually tell us—and what else should a modern quality-assurance system measure?
3. Most training and supervision models assume officers improve with repetition. These data show no relationship between assessment volume and accuracy. What in our own approach rests on that assumption?
4. When meaningful differences are found, how should an agency distinguish a training or system problem from an individual performance issue, and what safeguards should govern the use of officer-level results?
5. How could we systematically learn from high-performing officers and test whether their practices can be translated into better training, coaching, and supervision?
6. Structured assessment consumes real money in training, technology, and staff time. If we are not monitoring whether it is working at the officer level, how would we defend that investment to a funder or a legislature?

SECTION 5

Professional Development Opportunities

APPA Executive Leadership Summit

Aug 14–15, 2026 • Hyatt Regency Chicago

A focused, small-group event for executive-level leaders held immediately before the Training Institute, creating space for alignment, strategy, and leadership-level dialogue. Topics include leadership and workforce development, the evolving role of AI in community corrections, and reentry outcomes.

APPA 51st Annual Training Institute

Aug 16–19, 2026 • Virtual: Aug 11–Sep 11 • Chicago, IL

APPA's flagship hybrid training event featuring 80+ accredited workshops covering pretrial, probation, and parole practices, plenary sessions, the Women's Symposium, the Judicial Roundtable, the Community Corrections Chase (C3), and structured networking opportunities.

Registration is open now at appa-net.org.

SECTION 6

Upcoming Events

NAPE Board of Directors' Meeting

Mon, Aug 17, 2026

9:00–11:00 AM
Grand Suite 5, East Tower

NAPE Members' Reception

Mon, Aug 17, 2026

12:30–2:00 PM
Grand Hall K, East Tower

Effective Leadership Practices: From Cultivation to Implementation

Tue, Aug 18, 2026

3:15–4:45 PM
Grand Hall J

SECTION 7

Corporate Corner

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SECTION 8

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SECTION 9

Join the NAPE Network

JOIN THE NAPE NETWORK

Connect with probation executives shaping the future of the profession.

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