

## Security Threat Group Monitoring

*Increasing prison monitoring of gang members to reduce violence and contraband*

**Agency:** Pennsylvania Department of Corrections State Correctional Institution (SCI) Smithfield

**Trial Duration:**  
02/01/17–03/10/17

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### Context

Gangs within prison are identified as security threat groups (STGs) and may be responsible for a disproportionate amount of negative behaviors and violence.

### Key Finding

Increased STG monitoring allowed staff to more effectively identify threats and improve the detection of contraband within the facility.

### Background

Gangs are responsible for much of the violence and drug activity in prisons, and they may maintain their community networks even while incarcerated. SCI-Smithfield used enhanced intelligence monitoring of security threat groups (STGs) in an effort to reduce violence and drug activity.

### Trial Design

A dedicated intelligence officer was engaged for this trial to enable a higher level of monitoring not usually possible. A random sample of verified and suspected STG members (n=40) were randomly assigned to either increased monitoring (intervention) or business-as-usual (control). Intelligence from enhanced monitoring of the intervention group was added to each participant's file. Enhanced monitoring included closer monitoring of phone calls and emails, observation of STG members via the institutional camera system, development of confidential human sources (CHS), and additional urine drug screens and cell searches.

### Results

Enhanced monitoring helped to identify potential threats. For example, seven additional STG members were identified who had previously operated under the radar, and intelligence gathered at the prison led to the arrest of a gang-affiliated drug trafficker in the community. A large group, "The Big Money Gang," organized prior to the trial to control all drug and gambling activity in the facility, was identified and dismantled due to the enhanced monitoring of the trial. This resulted in the largest Suboxone seizure in the history of SCI-Smithfield

### STG Monitoring Trial Results

| Activity                            | Intervention | Control |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Newly identified STG members*       | 7            | 0       |
| Drug-related misconducts            | 4            | 0       |
| Positive drug tests                 | 4            | 0       |
| Newly identified gang relationships | 9            | 5       |
| Newly identified drug relationships | 9            | 5       |
| Drug confiscations                  | 2            | 0       |
| Arrests in community                | 1            | 0       |

\*statistically significant difference between two conditions (p=0.04)