



NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Terra Taylor

Presented by **Jason Miller, Office of the Commissioner, Chief of Communications and Community Relations**

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Department of Correction announces promotions in Office of Planning, Research and Reentry

Dover, DE -- Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) Commissioner Terra Taylor today announced leadership promotions in the Office of Planning, Research and Reentry. Deputy Chief of Planning, Research and Reentry Jessica Cline, who has served as Acting Chief since September 2024, has been promoted to Chief on a permanent basis. Damaris Kelly, DOC's Director of Compliance and Accreditation, has been promoted to Deputy Chief of Planning, Research and Reentry. Both promotions are effective immediately.

The Office of Planning, Research and Reentry plays a leading role in developing and implementing evidence-based rehabilitative treatment programs, including expansion of cognitive behavioral therapy programming, and assessment tools Department-wide. Team members oversee and coordinate prisoner reentry initiatives, lead the Department's data collection and analysis efforts, facilitate strategic planning, oversee accreditation by the American Correctional Association (ACA) and compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), provides project and grant management, manages policy development and review, evaluate programs offered to the supervised populations for adherence to evidence-based practices, and administer the prison education program in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Education.

"The Office of Planning, Research and Reentry is responsible for driving the Department of Correction to continually embrace new and innovative programs, strengthen partnerships, and implement proven strategies to promote public safety and successful reentry through effective supervision and rehabilitative services," **Commissioner Terra Taylor said**. "Jessica and Damaris bring extensive knowledge and experience to their leadership roles and are in a strong position to move this work forward seamlessly to advance our critical mission."

Chief of Planning, Research, and Reentry Jessica Cline is a 27-year DOC veteran who joined the Department in 1997 as a Probation and Parole Officer. She was promoted in 2006 to Probation and Parole Supervisor with responsibility over numerous areas, including Reentry Court, drug testing, the

DOC's case management system, probation absconders, participation in the National Criminal Justice Reform Project, policy development, and training. In this position she began to build a formalized statewide DOC infrastructure to support reentry. In 2019, she was named the Department's first Director of Reentry where she played a leadership role in implementing Executive Order 27 to build a statewide system of reentry support through collaboration across state government and with community-based service providers. As Director of Reentry, she worked closely with the Delaware Correctional Reentry Commission to develop and implement a [comprehensive reentry plan](#) and the [2021-2024 Delaware Recidivism Reduction System Blueprint](#) that continue to guide reentry reforms. [In October 2021, she was further promoted to Deputy Chief of Planning, Research and Reentry](#) with responsibility for strategic leadership and direction over reentry and the Office's role in research, assessment and evaluation, policy development and guidance, and education and rehabilitative programming. Chief Cline has completed several specialized trainings including Management Development for the Future (National Institute of Corrections) and the FBI Leeda Supervisor Leadership Institute and is a certified staff trainer for the DOC's multiple evidenced-based supervision tools. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice and Political Science from the University of Delaware. Chief Cline fills the position vacated by former Chief Heather (Zwickert) Doncaster who was promoted to a senior leadership position in the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

Deputy Chief of Planning, Research, and Reentry Damaris Kelly joined the DOC in 2019 as Director of Compliance and Accreditation in the Office of Planning, Research and Reentry. In this position she has overseen the DOC's efforts to achieve and maintain accreditation with the American Correctional Association (ACA) and maintain compliance with the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) which sets national standards around the prevention, detection and response to sexual assault, abuse and harassment in correctional facilities. She supervises the efforts of facility PREA Compliance Managers and PREA investigations and serves as a member of facility Critical Incident Review Teams. These successful efforts earned [national recognition in 2023 when the DOC was awarded the ACA Global Eagle and Lucy Webb Hayes awards](#) for achieving full ACA accreditation along with full PREA compliance. She has also developed instructional materials and conducted training for correctional staff in accreditation, PREA, and related topics. Kelly previously worked for the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (2016-2019) as a Management Analyst and Planner. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Law, Policy and Political Science and a Certificate in Criminal Justice from Wilmington University and an Associate in Applied Science in Homeland Security and Emergency Management from Delaware Tech. She has completed numerous specialized trainings and is the recipient of several recognition awards, including the statewide GEAR P3 Trailblazer Award awarded to the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center Accreditation Team and was nominated for multiple Governor's Team Excellent Awards.



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