

WISP

What have we learned?

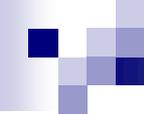
Seattle City Council

Presented by:
Angela Hawken, PhD
June 10, 2013



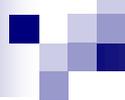
Outline

- Background
- Overview of WISP
- WISP implementation
- WISP outcomes
- Swift and Certain



Background

- Budget crises have led many states to consider alternatives to incarceration
- Most interventions have had little effect
 - Parole and probation failure rates have remained stable
- A more strategic approach is needed to improve compliance and reduce returns to prison



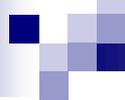
WISP

- The Washington Intensive Supervision Program (WISP)
- A pilot project to test if the principles of effective community supervision – clear rules, close monitoring, and swift and certain, but not severe, penalties for each violation – can succeed with parolees



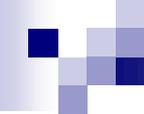
Introduction to WISP

- Applies HOPE principles to a higher risk population (parolees)
- Violation of parole conditions results in an immediate arrest and offender appears for hearing within a few days
- Violators are sanctioned to a few days in jail (sentences increase for repeat violations)
- Emphasis on personal responsibility and behavior change



WISP Implementation

- Assessed WISP implementation
- Program fidelity extraordinarily high
- Level of coordination among the staff members involved has been exemplary



Early WISP Outcomes

- WISP pilot was evaluated using an intent-to-treat randomized controlled trial
 - The “gold standard” for evaluation research
 - The trial is registered with the federal government



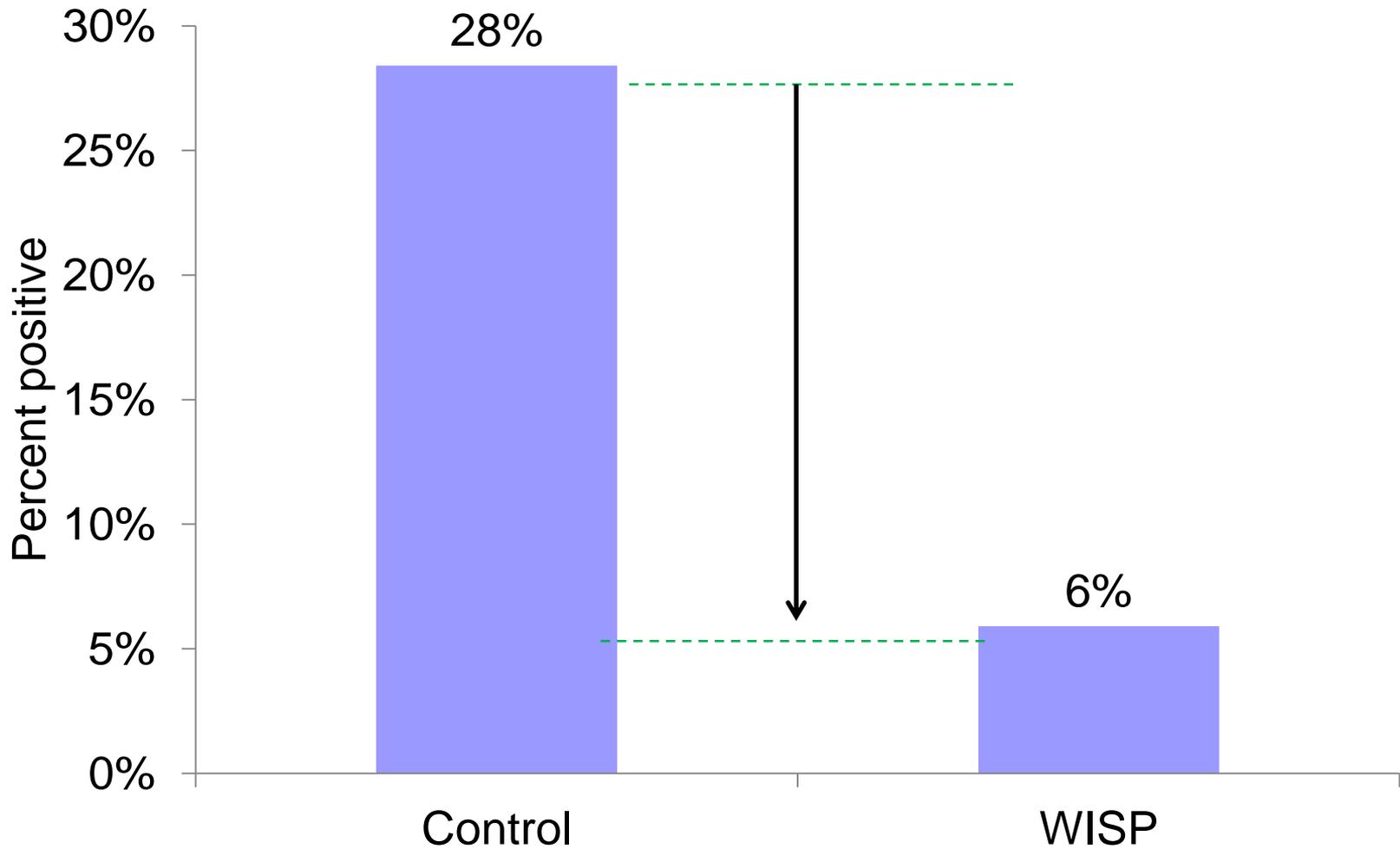
Description of WISP pilot RCT

- Location
 - Seattle Community Justice Center
- Pilot launch date
 - February, 2011
- Length of program
 - We followed subjects for 12 months
- Size of pilot
 - 70 subjects assigned to either WISP or PAU



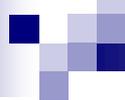
Summary of WISP Outcomes

Positive drug tests



Drug use & exposure to WISP

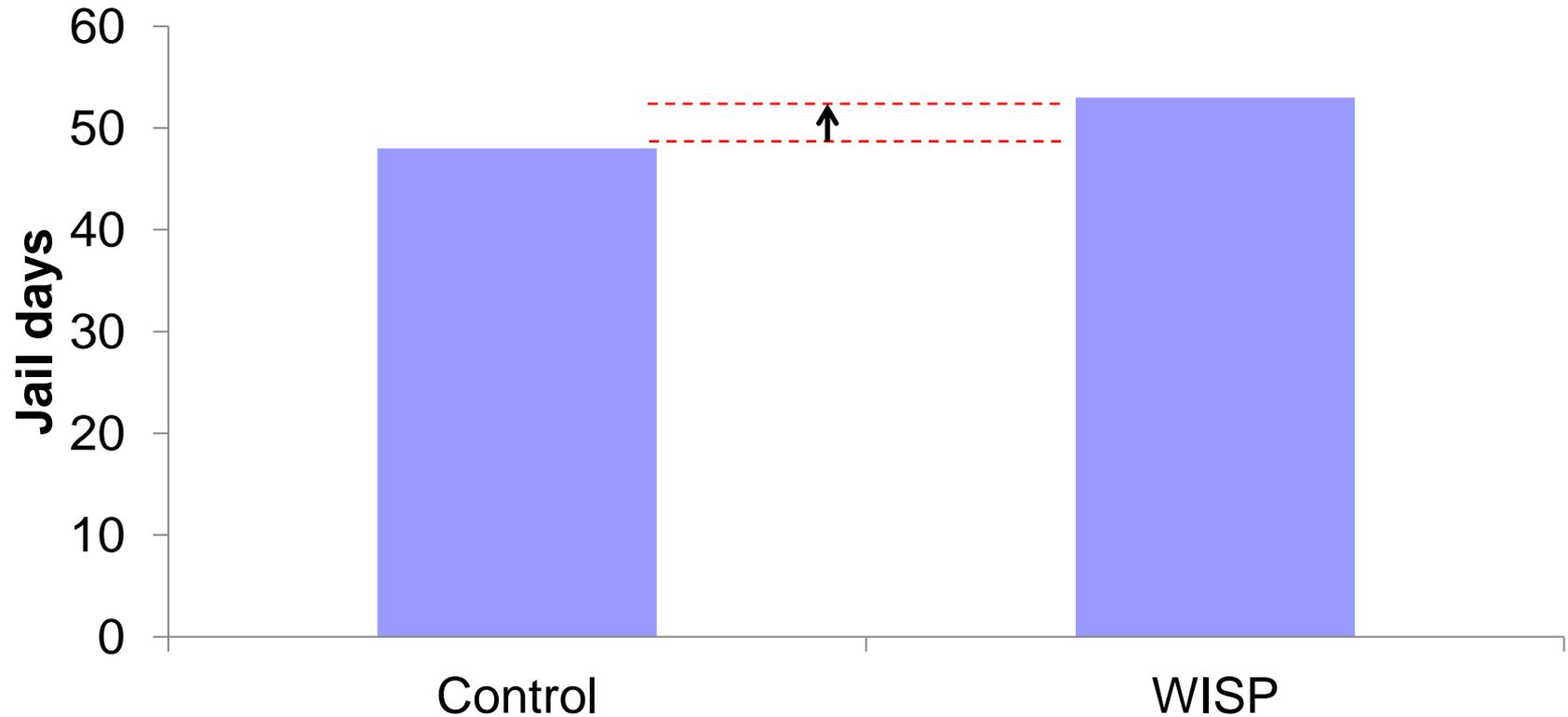
- The positive drug tests are front-loaded. 70% of positive drug tests occur within the first 90 days.
- As exposure to WISP increases, positive drug tests decline.
- For subjects assigned to WISP, the positive test rate fell with increasing exposure to the program, but the opposite held for parolees in the control group.



New Crimes

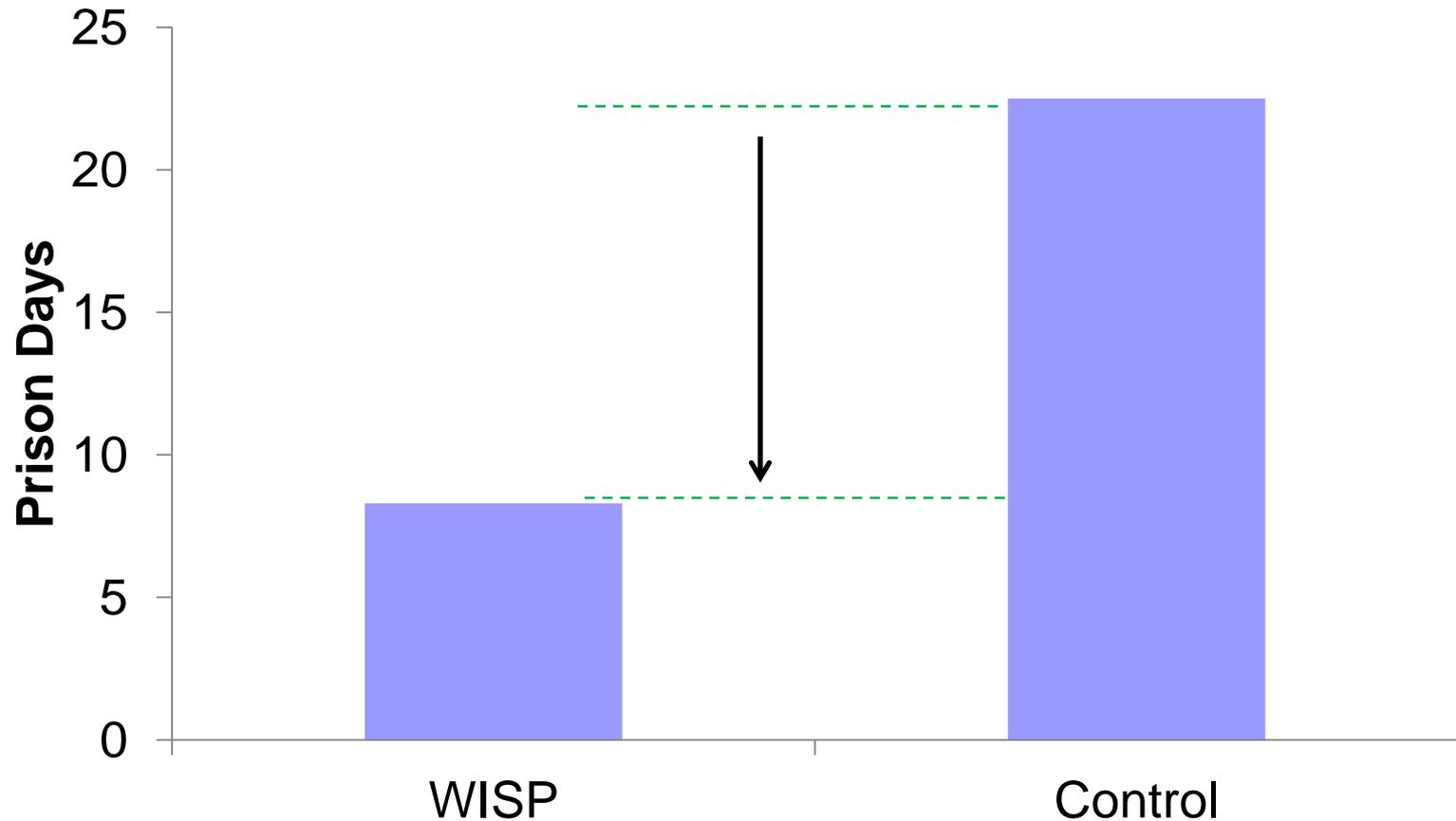
- At the one year follow up subjects in the control group had been arrested, convicted, and were sentenced to an incarceration term on six new crimes, while the WISP group had two.
- The trend is positive but we need to be cautious of drawing strong conclusions from small samples.

Jail Days (Average per offender)

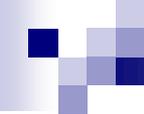


WISP led to an 8% increase in jail time

Prison Days (ave per offender)

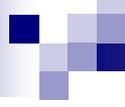


WISP led to 63% fewer prison days per offender



Summary of key findings

- WISP was associated with reductions in drug use and new crimes
- WISP was associated with an increase in jail days served but an decrease in prison days served
- WISP was associated with a decrease in overall incarceration



Swift and Certain

- Routine community supervision changed substantially following the passage of SB6204 (referred to as SAC)
- SAC has many cost-saving advantages over the original WISP program
- Original WISP delivered by the A-Team. Implementation will matter!



Recommendations

- WISP outcomes are promising and early indications suggest that SAC is running smoothly
- Encourage DOC to test improvements
 - What is an optimal sanctioning strategy?
 - What is the best approach to delivering services under SAC and what should these services be?



Contact information

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