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Policymakers and practitioners concerned about criminal justice issues have realized the importance of sound “front-end” decision-making. The actions taken in the initial stages of any criminal case—the decisions about the release or detention of an arrested person—can have an enormous bearing on the outcome of an individual case and, in the aggregate, on the quality and effectiveness of the jurisdiction’s criminal justice process. The stakes involved are high; they involve considerations of individual liberty, public safety, and the integrity of the judicial process. This Fourth Edition of the NYAPSA Release Standards points the way to improved policy and practice in this crucial area.

I would like to thank all the Release Standards Committee members for their hard work. The time and resources that each of them spent on this project is significant. The tireless dedication and commitment to the quality of their work displayed throughout this project will be apparent when reading this document. In addition, the committee members’ willingness to listen to each other’s views, to seek common ground, and to participate as team members rather than as individuals added enormous depth and perspective to these Standards. I was personally enriched, and I feel honored to have had the opportunity to work with such a fine group of pretrial professionals. I want to thank Monroe County and all the committee members’ agencies and departments for allowing us time and flexibility to work on this project.

My appreciation is extended to the NYC Criminal Justice Agency for their workshop and conference support for standard-related issues. I would like to thank The Office of Court Administration and The Division of Criminal Justice Services for their guidance.

Several NYAPSA members reviewed the draft standards in bringing this project to completion and provided valuable feedback. Specifically, I would like to thank Charlene Leistman, Jonathan Heller, Peter Kiers, Susan Mowrey, Angela Tolosa, Phil Galuppi, and Kathy McQuade, for taking the time to review the draft standards and then provide their thoughts and comments.

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Finally I would like to thank Lori Eville at the National Institute of Corrections, Shawn LaGrega and Janice Dean of the National Association of Pretrial Service Agencies for providing training on best practices in pretrial development, which helped solidify several issues and enabled practitioner-attendees from around the state to raise questions and concerns as their jurisdictions prepare to enter an era of New York State criminal Justice reform.

I hope these standards serve as a catalyst for change when criminal justice policymakers ask, "How do we fashion a criminal justice system that is just, fair, and sound?" I speak for the entire Board of Directors at NYAPSA in saying we encourage jurisdictions to implement these standards to the fullest extent as you audit your programs and enhance pretrial best practices. An informed, reasonable, honest and impartial response at the front end of the criminal justice system will resonate throughout the system and will improve the public's trust and confidence in how we deliver justice in New York State.

Sincerely,



Craig McNair
NYAPSA President
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