

Kokensparger, Kathleen

From: Wooten, Jeff
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 11:58 AM
To: Koebernick, Doug
Subject: RE: STRONG-R
Attachments: Designed to Fit - Hamilton et al., 2016.pdf; Hamilton-White-Paper_color.pdf; Strong R explanation 10-26.docx

Doug,

Please see below and attached re: STRONG-R RFIs.

- 1) Was/is there a quality assurance team or system in place to make sure that the assessment is being done correctly and that the appropriate time is being taken by staff members to administer it? **Yes**
- 2) If so, what does that look like and who is does that involve? **Denny Campbell and Joel Denny from Parole; Jonathan Bolen from NDCS.**
- 3) How does the Department know that the validity of the matrix is not tampered with to get the desire the outcome if the department does not have access to the data? Will Vantage not share the matrix with the department due to proprietary reasons? **Vantage is totally open with NDCS and nothing is hidden. We have access to anything we want and once the integration is complete we will have the capability to run our own reports. For right now though this is all part of the integration process.**
- 4) You mentioned unresolved issues in the response - is there any information on resolved issues that I could receive? and, any unresolved issues were addressed yesterday. **There are no resolved issues and the unresolved are items such as the severity index, codes and mapping issues. Yesterday we had members of Parole, Dr. Hamilton and Sean in the meeting and decided that these issues are easily resolved. We will hold a work conference from 2-5 August to correct all issues going forward.**
- 5) Are there any memorandums, etc. that exist within the Department that outline the concerns about the validity of the STRONG-R? **For NDCS there are no questions as to validity. ***See attached reports.*****

***At the 3 year mark Dr Hamilton will do a validation study on the Nebraska population only. It takes that long to gather enough data.

Best,

Jeff Wooten, Ed.D.

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From: Doug Koebernick [mailto:dkoebernick@leg.ne.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 8:35 AM
To: Wooten, Jeff
Subject: Re: STRONG-R

Thank you. As always, I appreciate your help.

Doug

On Thu, Jul 13, 2017 at 8:27 AM, Wooten, Jeff <Jeff.Wooten@nebraska.gov> wrote:

Doug,

Will get started on this. I am heading a work group today then leaving for WEC but will ensure this gets to the responsible person for a response.

Best,

Jeff Wooten, Ed.D.

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From: Doug Koebernick [mailto:dkoebernick@leg.ne.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 8:26 AM

To: Wooten, Jeff
Subject: Re: STRONG-R

Thank you. I have just a couple of follow up questions.

- 1) Was/is there a quality assurance team or system in place to make sure that the assessment is being done correctly and that the appropriate time is being taken by staff members to administer it?
- 2) If so, what does that look like and who is does that involve?
- 3) How does the Department know that the validity of the matrix is not tampered with to get the desire the outcome if the department do not have access to the data? Will Vantage not share the matrix with the department due to proprietary reasons?
- 4) You mentioned unresolved issues in the response - is there any information on resolved issues that I could receive? and,
- 5) Are there any memorandums, etc. that exist within the Department that outline the concerns about the validity of the STRONG-R?

On Thu, Jul 13, 2017 at 8:17 AM, Wooten, Jeff <Jeff.Wooten@nebraska.gov> wrote:

Doug,

Sorry – I thought I previously sent this. Please see attached.

Best,

Jeff Wooten, Ed.D.

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From: Doug Koebernick [mailto:dkoebernick@leg.ne.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 8:10 AM

To: Wooten, Jeff
Subject: Re: STRONG-R

Thank you but I didn't get the attachment.

Doug

On Thu, Jul 13, 2017 at 7:31 AM, Wooten, Jeff <Jeff.Wooten@nebraska.gov> wrote:

Doug,

Please see below. We had a very good meeting yesterday with Dr. Hamilton, Sean (CEO Vantage, NDCS and Parole personnel). We will be meeting for a work conference 2-5 August and resolve the remaining issues.

- Have any concerns been raised regarding the validity of the STRONG-R assessments being completed at the current time by staff or outside parties (such as Dr. Hamilton or Vantage)?
 - A number of concerns about the validity and reliability of the STRONG-R assessment results have been raised by NDCS staff members. Unresolved issues that I have personal involvement with surround the validity of the tool, itself:
 - There are errors in how the “Severity Index” of specific crimes is coded in the Vant4ge software. These errors affect the final risk and needs score calculations produced by the assessment.
 - Some offenses are not mapped to the appropriate questions. For example, a prior criminal conviction for “Arson 1st Degree” scores on a question that relates to prior assault convictions, not prior arson convictions. Some offenses are mapped to the appropriate questions, but do not have the appropriate index score/weight assigned. **(Legal/Legislative)**
 - These issues can only be fixed by a comprehensive review of all state statutes to determine whether (a) the substantive language of the law matches the crime description associated with each severity index score and (b) the offenses are mapped to the appropriate question in the STRONG-R. **(Legal/Legislative)**
 - The Criminal Conviction Record (CCR) software includes only state statutes and does not allow staff to select any city ordinance violations. Because of this, staff have either

not entered these convictions or have used a state statute that they deem to be the best proxy.

- In a number of cases, staff have entered “Official Misconduct” in the CCR because “Disorderly Conduct” is not an available option. However, “Official Misconduct” is qualitatively different from the convicted offense because it refers to malfeasance by a public official within his or her job capacity. **However, according to Dr. Hamilton, this does not change the risk associated to the offender.**

- I am aware of 12 frequently encountered ordinances that staff are either not entering or using proxy codes for.

- Both the missing offense codes and the substitution of proxy offense codes have an unknown effect on the calculated risk and needs scores produced by the tool.

- **There has not been consistency in how the STRONG-R training is delivered, either among NDCS trainers or between NDCS and Vant4ge trainers. However, we are resolving this issue by revising new user training for all users across NDCS and Parole.**

- Is there a new contract with Vantage that has been signed by the Department? If so, what is the cost of the new contract and why was the contract entered into by the Department? Allvest changed their name to Vantage. We did an addendum to the contract which increased the pricing by \$42,000 and reallocated other funds (which was included in the attached).

- How much has Vantage billed the Department since they signed their original contract? Please see attached
- Are there any other outside parties that have received funding from the Department to be involved in the STRONG-R project?
 - To the best of my knowledge, no other outside parties have received funding from NDCS to be involved in the STRONG-R project. My understanding is that all funds related to the STRONG-R have been paid directly to Vant4ge. Dr. Zachary Hamilton, who created the models upon which the STRONG-R is based, is employed by Vant4ge as a subcontractor, and he would have received his payments directly from Vant4ge.

Best,

Jeff Wooten, Ed.D.

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From: Doug Koebernick [mailto:dkoebernick@leg.ne.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2017 12:52 PM

To: Wooten, Jeff
Subject: Re: STRONG-R

Thank you. I just wanted to check because you had initially said you would give me the response the next day. I thought that was rather optimistic but appreciated your intent!

Doug

On Wed, Jul 12, 2017 at 12:48 PM, Wooten, Jeff <Jeff.Wooten@nebraska.gov> wrote:

Hi Doug,

I will have it out to you tomorrow. It was a very comprehensive question(s) and I am gathering responses from various persons who play a vital role in the STRONG-R.

Best,

Jeff Wooten, Ed.D.

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From: Doug Koebernick [mailto:dkoebernick@leg.ne.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2017 12:46 PM
To: Wooten, Jeff
Subject: Re: STRONG-R

Jeff,

Just thought I'd check to see if you have any idea when I will be receiving the rest of the response to this request. I have a couple of additional questions since I sent it in but will wait to see what I receive before submitting those.

Thanks,

Doug

On Thu, Jun 29, 2017 at 7:51 AM, Wooten, Jeff <Jeff.Wooten@nebraska.gov> wrote:

Doug,

I am gathering the requested information and should have the response completed tomorrow.

There was an increase in cost to cover the integration of STRONG-R with NiCams. Due to the sentence calculation IT project we were not ready to do the integration project during initial development; therefore, integration at a later time caused increased costs.

Below is a section of our AP for completing STRONG-Rs on all offenders w/in 3 yrs of PED/TRD and beyond.

As of yesterday we completed the July 1 goal. The Director may make an adjustment to the 12/10/17 date, giving us more time to complete the assessments on those with significant amounts of time left to do.

20	Complete assessments on inmates in the system by July 1, 2017. Shorten assessment time frames.	Mike Rothwell	By July 31, 2017 only those inmates with 3+ years from PED or TRD will still need assessments. All inmates currently incarcerated will have assessments completed by 12/10/2017. All inmates are currently receiving an RNR assessment on average within 45 days of arrival at intake, and will receive initial clinical assessments within 90 days of arrival by 9/30/2017.
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Best,

Jeff Wooten, Ed.D.

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