

SAN QUENTIN UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

*Slideshow depicts challenges and progress
improving medical care at San Quentin*

2 August 2007

*Contact: Rachael Kagan, Director of Communications 408 436-6867,
510 387-1292 (cell), rachael.kagan@cprinc.org*

SAN JOSE, Calif.— Members of the public who are interested in getting a glimpse inside California's oldest prison and learning more about the efforts to improve medical care there may now view a multimedia presentation -- San Quentin Under the Microscope -- at www.cprinc.org.

The short program highlights the immense challenges faced in delivering adequate medical care at San Quentin, given the facility's age, overcrowding, lack of sufficient staffing, space and supplies. Federal Receiver Robert Sillen visited San Quentin last year, on his second day on the job, and vowed to "put it under the microscope." Since then, an extraordinary collaboration between the Receiver's team and San Quentin's Warden, custody and medical leadership and staff has taken place, resulting in several significant improvements to the prison's medical system. One of the most concrete is the opening of a new emergency room to treat and stabilize patients with critical injuries and urgent care needs. It has been described as an oasis, which has lifted staff morale and improved patient access to care.

The Receivership is the result of a 2001 class action law suit - *Plata v. Schwarzenegger* - that found the medical care in California's 33 adult prisons violates the Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which forbids cruel and unusual punishment. U.S. District Court Judge Thelton E. Henderson appointed Sillen as Receiver in February 2006 and charged him with taking over the operations of the state's prison medical system in order to bring it up to constitutional levels. Sillen started work April 17, 2006.

The two-and-a-half minute slideshow depicts a portion of the work done between the July 2006 launch of the Receiver's San Quentin project and the June 2007 opening of the prison's new emergency room, known as the Triage and Treatment Area (TTA). It is an important step toward creating constitutional medical conditions at San Quentin, where much work remains to be done.

A fact sheet on the new TTA, and more information about the Receiver's ongoing work at San Quentin, including plans for building a new Central Health Services Center, are available on the Receiver's web site at <http://www.cprinc.org/projects.htm>.

###