

**MINUTES**  
**Community Justice Council**  
**Executive Committee**

**Meeting of:**

Wednesday January 15, 2014

12:15pm

Location: Milwaukee County Courthouse, Room 609

PRESENT: US Attorney James Santelle, Chief Judge Jeffrey Kremers, Public Policy Forum President Rob Henken, District Attorney John Chisholm, First Assistant Public Defender Tom Reed, Director of the Homicide Review Commission Mallory O'Brien, Director of Health and Human Services Héctor Colón, HOC Superintendent Mike Hafemann, Fiscal and Management Analyst Veronica Rudychev, MCSO Inspector Richard Schmidt, Department of Corrections Regional Chief Niel Thoreson, CJC Coordinator Nate Holton, and CJC Community Liaison Carmella DeLucia

I. Convene and Updates (*John Chisholm*)

II. National Institute of Justice 'Sentinel Event'

- The 'Sentinel Event' Review Pilot Project is a possible opportunity for decision-makers to look at our system in a learn-from-error approach which looks at a particular issue that signals a possible weakness in the system. District Attorney John Chisholm informed the group that the NIJ has an interest in looking at Milwaukee as they follow the NIJ Sentinel Event process. He believes that there is enough infrastructure in place to look more closely at areas of improvement and added that this review process is consistent with Jim Santelle's Police Community Relations Entity.
- Tom Reed suggested that this effort would allow us to look into the patterns of events. Early Interventions is looking at issues case by case, but this would allow us to track on a larger scale the events that are repeatedly affecting our System in multiple facets. These events need attention so that we can learn from their occurrence as to when and why they are happening so we can provide better outcomes for people in contact with our System.
- Kremers explained that a suggested event to review was wrongful release; this would require the group to set up the framework and wait for an event to happen that fits the criteria. Once an event happens that fits the criteria, we can start processing and reviewing the event for where the errors took place and how we can prevent them from occurring again. Kit Murphy McNally added that this NIJ Event asks for the event and a brief summary of what happened.
- Kremer's suggested that the group follow up with the NIJ for more information.

III. Wisconsin Evidence Based Decision Making (EBDM) Summit January 28-29th (*Kremers*)

- Kremers updated the Council that as of yesterday the registered number of teams was 23, with most of those teams from counties in WI. The point of the summit is to give people a recap of what is going on with EBDM efforts around the country and prepare for the next cycle.

IV. Update on Central Liaison Unit (*Jeff Kremers*)

- Kremers updated the group on the Central Liaison Unit (CLU) which is part of the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) grant. Through this grant the Council has identified four areas of improvement which have resulted in creating the Praxis Template, the Dosage Probation Unit in the DOC which tests the notion of how we do sentencing and how we structure their requirements, the Mental Health initiatives which looks into how we are treating mentally ill offenders, and Early Interventions which looks at cases as early as possible. Early Interventions also provides eligibility for Deferred Prosecution Agreements (DPA's) were those eligible through the DA's office receive a reduced charge or dismissal based on his/her needs. This agreement can run 6 months to a year if he/she meets all the requirements.
- JusticePoint applied and received a \$300,000 dollar grant for the Community Liaison Unit (CLU) which would staff a coordinator and three other individuals. The CLU would work on monitoring people from TAD program referrals, another 90 under the Grant, individuals from DTC, and Veteran's court in a one year pilot program. All trainings for the CLU which will be provided through a contractor from Mimi's office should be done by the middle of February.

V. Adjourn

**CJC Strategic Planning**

February 21, 2014

Location: 633 W. Wisconsin Ave, 4th Floor Conference Room

Time: 1-5:00pm

**Next meeting is March 19th, 2014 at 12:15pm at the Courthouse Room 609**

Location: Milwaukee County Courthouse Room 609

Time: 12:15-1:45pm

Note: EC Meeting in February is cancelled due to strategic planning



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Justice Programs

*National Institute of Justice*

January 3, 2014

**An Invitation to Participate in a 'Sentinel Event' Review  
Pilot Project (deadline for application: 2/14/14)**

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) — the scientific research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice — invites you and a team from your jurisdiction to participate in a new initiative to explore the potential for learning from errors in the criminal justice system.

Mistakes that occur in a system as complex as our criminal justice system are rarely the result of a single act or "bad actor." More often, errors represent a "sentinel event" — that is, an outcome that signals a possible weakness in the system. Other fields — such as aviation and medicine — have had notable success in using a non-blaming, all-stakeholder review process to analyze a sentinel event. In criminal justice, a sentinel event could be a wrongful conviction or even a "near-miss" that would have led to a bad outcome if it had not been caught. To learn more about a sentinel events review process, read a recently published article in the *NIJ Journal* by James Doyle.

NIJ will be selecting several jurisdictions from around the country to work with us in further developing this initiative. We hope that your jurisdiction is interested in forming a team and applying for this opportunity.

Overview of Project

NIJ will select up to three sites to explore whether a sentinel events, learning-from-error approach could work in the criminal justice system. Sites would participate in a two-stage process. In Stage 1, Analysis and Strategic Planning (3–5 months), the jurisdiction would work with NIJ and the Office of Justice Program's Diagnostic Center (DC) to develop a strategy for conducting a sentinel event review, including identifying particular resources that your jurisdiction might need. We would provide technical assistance as needed, such as subject-matter expert consultants and/or meeting facilitators. For example, if the event under review involved a false confession, an expert on this issue could be provided to assist in the review; or, if an exoneration or "near miss" involved a particular forensic science such as eyewitness testimony or DNA evidence, a subject-matter expert could be provided. Stage 2, Implementation and Assessment, is the actual all-stakeholder, non-blaming, forward-looking review of the event itself. This would also include an assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the process, for which we also would provide support.

### Basic Minimum Requirements

There are two primary requirements: the identification of one or more sentinel events to be reviewed and an all-stakeholders team that is enthusiastic about participating in the process.

#### **1. Identify one (or more) event that could potentially be a sentinel event that:**

- Could signal an underlying weakness in the system.
- Is likely the result of compound errors.
- May, if properly analyzed and addressed, provide important keys to strengthening the system and preventing future adverse events or outcomes.

Examples of a sentinel event include:

- A “wrongful release” of an offender who then commits a violent crime(s).
- The death or injury of a mentally ill or very young detainee.
- A “near miss” and last-minute “good catch” where the most extreme potential harm of the event was intercepted and prevented — for example, a chief suspect whose innocence, before conviction, is successfully determined by the crime lab or through corroboration of an alibi.
- An exoneration after a wrongful conviction.
- Resolution of a “cold case” after staying “cold” too long.
- Smaller events, such as a number of fruitless stops-and-frisks, or a series of misdemeanor detainees held for days past their maximum sentences.

It is important to note that a sentinel event need not be spectacular or notorious, as one goal of this project is to learn from a range of events where review is not compelled by public outcry or media pressure, but, rather, is *chosen* by criminal justice leaders as a way learn and reduce the risk of future error.

The sentinel event should contain sufficient documentation or other sources of information (e.g., interview subjects) in manageable form to permit comprehensive analysis.

An event for which a disciplinary proceeding or civil suit has been filed or resolved would not be disqualified; however, applicant-sites should recognize that one of the goals of this project is to improve “forward-looking accountability” that aims to reduce risk, and not to engage in disciplinary or compensatory blaming.

#### **2. Identify an all-stakeholders team that is enthusiastic about conducting the review.**

NIJ assumes that the composition of the “all-stakeholders” team will vary depending on the sentinel event being reviewed and particular exigencies within a jurisdiction. For example, the review of a wrongful conviction would likely include stakeholders representing the perspectives of policing, prosecution, defense, judiciary, victims, state or local risk manager, and the exoneree. The review of a wrongful release of a dangerous prisoner would likely include stakeholders representing the perspectives of corrections and parole or probation, in addition to prosecution, victims, judiciary, and defense.

NIJ requires that the team include stakeholders from *at least four* of the following six core criminal justice groups:

- Policing
- Prosecution
- Victims
- Defense
- Judiciary
- Crime lab

A jurisdiction may want to consider other team members, depending on the event to be reviewed, including community or institutional corrections officials, mental health professionals, risk managers, political leaders and policymakers, and scholars or researchers from a local school of criminal justice or law school. There is a minimum, but no maximum, number of team members required.

You will note that we have also included your jurisdiction's risk manager in this invitation. Although we do not consider the risk-manager role as one of the six "core" stakeholder groups from which a team would be drawn, we do believe that the value of a sentinel-events review process will be instantly recognized by risk managers who, on an ongoing basis, engage in efforts to mitigate future negative outcomes, and, therefore, we encourage you to consider including these individuals in planning.

Team members need not be the individuals actually involved in the sentinel event; they should, however, be equipped by experience to understand and represent the perspectives of their practitioner communities. In addition, the team members should have permission to access relevant documents that might be expected to be part of the review.

Team members should be prepared to draft and enter into a memorandum of understanding in which they define as a common ground the non-blaming, all-stakeholders approach of a sentinel event review process, including rules of confidentiality and the process to which they commit themselves.

**Letters of support from the leadership of each participating stakeholder group are required.** Team members need not be the principals of their agencies, but should be able to act with the support of their principals as demonstrated in a letter of support.

#### Application Process

An application must include:

1. A brief summary of the event(s) that the jurisdiction would like to review, including a basic description and when it occurred.
2. A list of key team members (name and position) representing the four or more stakeholders groups that would participate in the review. In addition, please designate one person as the **team point of contact** for communicating with NIJ during the selection process.

3. Letters of support from the leadership of each participating stakeholder group.

NIJ will first screen applications to determine if these basic minimum requirements have been met. We will then ask sites to complete a “readiness questionnaire” to get more background about the event and the availability of records or other documentation, which will allow us to make assessments regarding what assistance NIJ and the Diagnostic Center might provide.

**Applications are due by 5:00 pm EST Friday, February 14, 2014. Applications, including all supporting documentation, should be emailed to the OJP Diagnostic Center at [DiagnosticCenter@ojp.usdoj.gov](mailto:DiagnosticCenter@ojp.usdoj.gov).**