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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State's collaborative approach to improving justice system gains national support

Madison, Wis. (Sept. 29, 2016) – Wisconsin's collaborative approach to improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system through evidence-based strategies is being rewarded with continued support from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC).

NIC recently announced that a state team, and local teams from eight counties, will receive "Phase VI" technical support through 2017 to help refine and implement plans developed in [earlier phases](#) of the [Evidence-Based Decision Making \(EBDM\) Initiative](#).

"This is well-deserved recognition and support. Our justice system partners at the state and local levels have been working together to ensure that Wisconsin has the most effective justice system possible. We look forward to continuing this cooperation with our partners and to working with NIC's support," said Supreme Court Chief Justice Patience Drake Roggensack.

EBDM focuses on incorporating proven strategies for building collaboration, implementing change, and reducing recidivism. Wisconsin is one of six states with jurisdictions selected to participate in the initiative, which began in 2008. [Milwaukee](#) and [Eau Claire](#) counties established pilot programs that now serve as national models.

NIC Director Jim Cosby wrote in a letter to the state EBDM team that technical assistance will be provided for the state and following counties: Chippewa, Eau Claire, La Crosse, Marathon, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Rock and Waukesha. The state EBDM team is a formal [subcommittee](#) of the statewide [Criminal Justice Coordinating Council](#) (CJCC), which oversees statewide EBDM efforts. Local EBDM teams are part of similar coordinating councils that have now formed in [66 Wisconsin counties and two tribes](#).

"The selection decisions were very difficult; we were impressed with the level of commitment demonstrated by all of the Phase V teams and were pleased that the applications reflected a genuine commitment to the EBDM initiative and its goals, as well as a tremendous amount of effort by the state and local policy teams to identify critical targets for change," Cosby wrote.

Members of the [state EBDM team](#) represent a wide range of groups and disciplines, including circuit court judges, prosecutors, public defenders, legislators, law enforcement officials, researchers, the state Department of Corrections, state Department of Justice and the Wisconsin Counties Association. Rock County District Attorney David O'Leary chairs the subcommittee, and State Public Defender Kelli Thompson serves as vice-chair. The state

Department of Justice, state Department of Corrections and State Public Defenders Office provide staff support and other resources for the initiative.

The goal of Phase VI is to expand collaboration and the scope of people involved in EBDM, implement specific action plans, strengthen state and local partnerships, and proactively engage community stakeholders in advancing EBDM. As part of the first step in Phase VI, teams are expected to review, further develop, and finalize their logic models and work plans, prior to moving into implementation.

During [Phase V](#), state and local teams identified “change targets,” which may address a variety of issues, such as: training standards for telecommunications operators; creating or expanding pretrial and diversion programs; using risk assessments to inform decisions; re-entry planning for local jails; methods for providing uniformity in plea negotiations; tools for ensuring consistency in rewards and sanctions for pretrial programs, treatment courts, and community supervision; bail reform; model practices for training and policies; examining the use of confinement to address failure to pay financial obligations; diverting those with behavioral and mental health issues from the justice system; increasing efficiencies in case processing; increasing the role of victims and advocates; and ensuring that all programming provided, either in the community or in custody, is evidence-based.

As described by NIC: “EBDM is a strategic and deliberate method of applying empirical knowledge and research-supported principles to justice system decisions made at the case, agency, and system level. The initiative team developed the EBDM framework, which posits that public safety outcomes will be improved when justice system stakeholders engage in truly collaborative partnerships, use research to guide their work, and work together to achieve safer communities, more efficient use of tax dollars, and fewer victims.”

Judicial members of the statewide EBDM team include: Judge Jeffrey A. Kremers, Milwaukee County Circuit Court; Judge Carl Ashley, Milwaukee County Circuit Court; and Judge Elliott M. Levine, La Crosse County Circuit Court. Court staff on the state team include Tommy Gubbin, Office of Court Operations, and Holly Szablewski, district court administrator, First Judicial Administrative District.

For more information about evidence-based practices in the Wisconsin court system, contact Tommy Gubbin, 261-0684 or tommy.gubbin@wicourts.gov. For information about the NIC’s EBDM Initiative, contact Lori Eville, correctional program specialist in the NIC’s Community Services Division, (202) 514-0118 or leville@bop.gov.

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