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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Wisconsin Moves to Implementation Phase of Evidence-Based Decision Making Initiative in State and Local Criminal Justice Systems**

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MADISON, Wis. – Following a competitive application process, Wisconsin has been invited to partner with the United States Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to start Phase VI of the *Evidence-Based Decision Making in State and Local Criminal Justice Systems Initiative* (EBDM). NIC’s EBDM initiative aims to apply “empirical knowledge and research-supported principles to justice system decisions made at the case, agency and system level and seeks to equip criminal justice local and state policymakers with the information, processes, and tools that will result in measurable reductions of pretrial misconduct, post-conviction reoffending, and other forms of community harm resulting from crime.”

“Through the involvement and engagement of stakeholders from across Wisconsin’s criminal justice system, Wisconsin’s EBDM teams have developed a shared vision for criminal justice system reform in Wisconsin,” said Attorney General Brad Schimel. “NIC providing Wisconsin their expertise and an opportunity to continue this shared vision is a big win for our state.”

Phase VI of the Initiative will build off of recent collaborative planning efforts to enable state and local teams in Wisconsin to partner in implementing evidence-based strategies to improve the criminal justice system. At the state level, Wisconsin’s EBDM efforts have been supported and led by the State Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), which is co-chaired by Attorney General Brad Schimel and Department of Corrections Secretary Jon Litscher. The CJCC has created an EBDM subcommittee dedicated to the project, which includes state and local membership from multiple disciplines within the traditional criminal justice system as well as many non-traditional criminal justice stakeholders.

“The Department of Corrections is committed to moving forward with our criminal justice partners to integrate evidence-based decision making into Wisconsin’s criminal justice system,” said DOC Secretary Jon Litscher. “Wisconsin’s selection for Phase VI of this initiative is a testament to the efforts by the state Criminal Justice Coordinating Council to position Wisconsin at the vanguard of cutting-edge efforts to utilize empirical research in driving enhancements to our criminal justice system.”

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Wisconsin State Public Defender Kelli Thompson, and vice chair of the state team, added, “We are pleased to hear the news that Wisconsin was selected to participate in Phase VI of the NIC’s EBDM project. Our selection continues to place Wisconsin at the national forefront of evidence-based decision making in its criminal justice system, and our justice professionals and policy-makers will continue to benefit from working closely with national experts.”

Working collaboratively with the state team are eight local teams – Chippewa County, Eau Claire County, La Crosse County, Marathon County, Milwaukee County, Outagamie County, Rock County, and Waukesha County. Through their local CJCCs, these local teams have also developed strong collaborative, multidisciplinary EBDM teams dedicated to these efforts. As these teams move into Phase VI of the Initiative, the work of the state team in collaboration with these local teams throughout Phase V has created a strong consortium of stakeholders moving forward towards common goals for criminal justice system reform.

During Phase VI, Wisconsin’s EBDM teams will work to implement the goals and initiatives identified during the Phase V planning process. The state’s implementation plans are centered on three overarching goals for the criminal justice system: 1) increase public safety, reduce harm, and improve the quality of life; 2) promote fairness and equal treatment; and 3) use resources effectively. To advance these goals, the state team has developed a multi-faceted plan that will implement a variety of approaches at different decision points across the criminal justice system. These approaches and decision points include such things as creating or expanding pretrial or diversion programs, increasing the use of risk and needs assessments at different points in the system, and developing model policies and training programs for use across the state. Through this approach, the state team seeks to implement criminal justice improvements that have a true system-wide impact.

Rock County District Attorney Dave O’Leary, chair of the state’s team, said in response to being invited to participate in Phase VI, “As chair of the State’s EBDM committee, I am proud and honored that Wisconsin has been selected to lead the nation in criminal justice reform. By collaborating with all members of the criminal justice system, we will align our limited resources to identify and focus on high-risk offenders that are a danger to our community. We will also increase our efforts to divert low-risk offenders from entering and remaining in the criminal justice system. These efforts are designed to remove bias and address issues such as disproportionate minority confinement by the collection and examination of recidivism data. I look forward to working with all of the system partners in these important efforts.”

Phase VI will begin November 1, 2016 and will be initially funded through December 2017.

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