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**Margaret C. Carpenter**  
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**ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO TO COUNTIES**

**MEMO # 09-09**

**DATE:** September 9, 2009

**TO:** County Departments of Human/Social Services Directors

**FROM:** Margaret C. Carpenter, Administrator 

**SUBJECT:** Planning and Decision-Making for Youth Committed to Juvenile Corrections – Joint Planning and Review Process – **Advisory Meetings Scheduled**

County human and social services agencies expect a high degree of control and collaboration when they place children and youth in alternate care. My staff and I have heard from a number of agency directors and program managers that they do not have a similar opportunity for control and collaboration when youth are placed in state juvenile correctional facilities and programs. As we have talked with directors, we found many who do not have complete information about the joint planning and review process through which the Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) has promoted collaborative decision-making for over 20 years. We also have heard frustration with certain aspects of the process that counties believe limit their opportunity for input.

The purpose of this memorandum is two-fold. First, it provides information for county directors and program managers as to how the joint planning and review process works and how counties can participate to make their views known. The procedure by which counties and others can appeal state decisions is also outlined. Second, the memo describes several ways by which DJC will obtain county involvement in identifying problems with joint planning and decision-making, and developing solutions for the identified problems.

**1. Joint Planning and Review**

**OJOR and JPRC:** The Office of Juvenile Offender Review (OJOR) is the agency with the legal authority to release youth from confinement in a Wisconsin juvenile correctional institution. The OJOR staff, known as Juvenile Review and Release Specialists, are stationed at Ethan Allen School, Lincoln Hills School, Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center and Southern Oaks Girls School. They convene a Joint Planning and Review Committee (JPRC) for every youth committed under a juvenile correctional disposition. The JPRC consists of the OJOR reviewer, the institution social worker, a representative of the committing county, the state or county field agent, the youth, and the youth's parents or guardian.

**Initial meeting:** The initial meeting must take place within 35 days of admission. Information from youth assessments performed during the initial weeks (risk, needs/strengths, education, mental health, AODA) is used to guide individualized case plan development, along with the court order and victim considerations. Based on the JPRC recommendation, each youth's individual goals, case plan, treatment/placement and tentative release plan are set. County representatives provide critical information for initial JPRC decision-making, including family and youth background, previous interventions, court sentiment and availability of post-release supports and services.

**Review and decisions:** OJOR meets with each youth every 90 days, and convenes formal meetings of the JPRC at least every 180 days. State and county JPRC members may request an earlier meeting if changed circumstances make a review advisable. At any time a JPRC member may contact other state and county members to seek their agreement that a certain action be taken (for example, making a youth eligible for release); a formal in-person review would only be held if the members could not reach consensus on the requested action. Ultimately, OJOR has the legal decision-making authority regarding a youth's release from a juvenile correctional institution, administrative transfer of youth, the placement category for youth on community supervision, and whether a request for an extension will be submitted to the committing court. [s. DOC 371.10(5)(a)] However, the JPRC process provides a means for all the involved parties to make their views known and work through disagreements. Particularly when a county will be providing aftercare supervision of a youth upon release, it is important that the county be participating fully in the JPRC process, and have its views given due influence by OJOR.

**Returns:** Once youth are transferred or released to the community, the JPRC does not have an active role in making decisions and monitoring their progress. The JPRC is re-convened if a youth is returned to the institution via aftercare revocation, change of placement or termination of Corrective Sanctions supervision. Usually held 3 to 5 weeks after the youth is re-admitted, the meeting is to decide what will be required of the youth before s/he goes back to the community. Again, the county member of the JPRC has input as to how long of a placement is adequate and whether a youth should participate in additional programs as a condition of release.

**Appeals:** In the majority of cases, the JPRC members are in agreement as to (1) what a youth will be expected to accomplish while she or he is incarcerated, and (2) when the youth has progressed sufficiently that he/she can be made eligible for release. However, disagreements do occur. The state and county JPRC members have the right to request that the Division Administrator review an OJOR decision. According to administrative code in s. DOC 371.10(6), the person requesting the review must submit the request in writing to the OJOR director within 7 days of the day the decision is issued. [Note: The Division will waive this deadline for good cause.] The Administrator has 7 days to issue a decision. There is no special form on which the appeal must be submitted. Most of the appeals we've received in the past several years have been memos sent by e-mail. In reviewing the appeal decisions in recent years, we found that almost all of them had been resolved in favor of releasing youth to the community. We urge counties that disagree with an OJOR decision to consider using the appeal process.

## **2. Policy and Process Examination**

In the coming months, the Division of Juvenile Corrections will engage with county agencies and other stakeholders to examine the JPRC process and the role of OJOR in monitoring and making decisions

about youth in juvenile corrections. We have heard the criticism of our policies and procedures and believe that there is room for improvement. Through being responsive to county concerns, the Division can effect positive change while continuing to fulfill the agency's statutory responsibilities under Chapter 938.

We have met with the Executive Board of the Wisconsin County Human Services Association (WCHSA) and received their advice as to how to proceed. In accordance with their recommendation, we plan to meet with the WCHSA Children and Families Policy Advisory Committee on September 18<sup>th</sup> and the Division's Juvenile Corrections Technical Advisory Committee on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss problems and strengths of the JPRC process. We will report back to the WCHSA Executive Board on any changes DJC plans to make to the JPRC process as a result of these discussions.

Note: You are welcome to attend one of the Juvenile Corrections Technical Advisory Committee meetings to join in the discussion. Both meetings will be held at the DOC central office, 3099 East Washington Avenue in Madison, in the Secretary's Conference Room. The October 2 meeting is from 10:00am to 12:30pm, and the October 6 meeting is 10:00am to noon.

If you are interested in sharing your thoughts but cannot attend one of the meetings described above, please send comments to OJOR Director Shelley Hagan at 608-240-5918 or [Shelley.hagan@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Shelley.hagan@wisconsin.gov); or Silvia Jackson, Assistant Administrator, at 608-240-5902 or [Silvia.jackson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Silvia.jackson@wisconsin.gov).

In conclusion, let me say that the Joint Planning and Review process was designed to provide maximum opportunity for key stakeholders to share information, represent their agency's interests and make recommendations that promote a balanced approach to juvenile crime. I am committed to making any changes that are necessary to assure that the process is effective for counties, courts, communities, youth and families. I welcome your participation in this effort.

cc: Rick Raemisch, Secretary, DOC  
Ismael Ozanne, Deputy Secretary, DOC  
Carrie Templeton, Executive Assistant, DOC  
Silvia Jackson, Assistant Administrator, DOC/DJC  
Cyrus Behroozi, Administrator, DCF/DSP  
Diane Bloecher, Director, Child Welfare Licensing Section DCF/DSP  
Patrick Cork, Interim Director of Area Administration, DHS/DES  
Greg Van Rybroek, Director, DHS/MJTC  
DHS/DCF Area Administrators  
DHS/DCF Human Service Area Coordinators  
DOC/DJC Management staff  
County Youth Aids contacts  
Court-attached juvenile court intake offices