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ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO TO COUNTIES

MEMO # 15-13

DATE: September 28, 2015
TO: County Departments of Human/Social Services Directors
FROM: Paul J. Westerhaus, Administrator 
SUBJECT: DJC Community Supervision Pilot Program

The Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) strives to be on the forefront of innovative and evidence-based practices to promote positive youth outcomes and reduce recidivism among Wisconsin's delinquent youth. One of our primary services areas, community supervision (i.e., aftercare and Corrective Sanctions Program), is prime for reform as we learn more about which interventions and approaches to supervision are most effective among the high-risk delinquent youth in our care.

To advance our practice in this area, as part of its 2015-2017 biennial budget request, DJC proposed changes to sections of Wisconsin Statute governing the community supervision services we provide to allow us to better align our services and strategies with risk- and need-based, strength-based, and family-focused models shown to be effective in reducing recidivism. DJC's requested changes were passed into law and will go into effect July 1, 2017.

The new statutory language includes the following changes to provisions impacting community supervision:

- The removal of language separating corrective sanctions and state aftercare, and replacing those terms with the broader term community supervision.
- The combination of appropriations in order to provide community supervision services based upon each individual juveniles' risks and needs.
- The removal of daily rate amounts for state aftercare and corrective sanctions from statutes in order to allow for multiple rates based upon intensity of services.

The statutory changes do not affect provision of aftercare by counties that choose to do so.

As a result of these changes, future charges to counties for community supervision services, beginning July 1, 2017, will be based on the service intensity and program costs necessary to reduce the youth's risk of re-offense. Community supervision daily rates will be set each fiscal year to reflect current cost and population trends and DJC's program services structure.

To prepare for these upcoming changes, DJC is launching a Community Supervision Pilot Program that will run from October 1, 2015, through September 30, 2016. To align with evidence based practices, DJC will be testing a new case management approach to prioritize engaging each youth and family in pro-social skill development and desistance from delinquent activity through meaningful case planning and provision of services addressing each youth's unique needs. At the same time, the new approach will promote rewarding positive youth behavior, employing alternatives to confinement in response to supervision violations, and having quality, skill-building contacts with youth at a frequency appropriate to each youth's level of risk and need. Data will be collected throughout the pilot to evaluate service delivery effectiveness as well as to help guide additional changes and modifications to the model prior to its Division-wide implementation.

Three DJC field agents and their youth counselor and community coach counterparts have been selected to participate in the pilot and have completed extensive training in the competencies required to implement the new supervision system, philosophy and practices. Although DJC agents already employ various aspects of evidence-based practice, the refinement and application of these skills and practices will be a primary focus of the pilot.

Pilot youth will be identified prior to release to DJC aftercare or Corrective Sanctions supervision from Copper Lake School, Lincoln Hills School, Grow Academy, or an alternate care facility and will be assigned to one of the three participating agents. The youth's participation in the pilot will be discussed through the Joint Planning and Review Committee process.

DJC recognizes that providing quality, research-based interventions to Wisconsin youth and families is imperative to the success of our juvenile justice system and the youth that we serve. The Division believes that the proposed changes to community supervision will help us to better serve our county partners while promoting public safety, reducing recidivism, and improving the welfare of our youth.

Please contact Ragen Shapiro with any questions in regards to the DJC Community Supervision Pilot. Ms. Shapiro can be reached at 608-240-5938 or RagenA.Shapiro@wisconsin.gov.

Cc: Edward F. Wall, Secretary, DOC
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Memo # 15-13
September 28, 2015
Page 3

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