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John D. Paquin
Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO TO COUNTIES

MEMO # 17-01

DATE: January 17, 2017

TO: County Departments of Human/Social Services Directors

FROM: John D. Paquin, Administrator 
Shelby A. B. McCulley, Assistant Administrator 

SUBJECT: COMPAS-Youth Assessment Tool and DOC-County MOUs

This memo is a reminder that the County COMPAS MOU renewal process is coming up in February. A DOC representative will be in touch with counties that use one or more COMPAS assessment tools to facilitate the MOU renewal process.

The Department of Corrections strongly values our partnerships with counties. We are in communication with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) regarding their commitment to moving towards a single risk/need assessment for justice-involved youth and will collaborate with DCF on this transition as needed. There are a number of steps in this process, however, and it is expected to take some time. In the meantime, DOC will continue to make the COMPAS applications available at no cost to the agencies that wish to use them. Best practice supports continued use of a risk/needs assessment, and counties that wish to continue using COMPAS must complete the MOU renewal process.

Furthermore, we are excited about some upcoming developments for counties using the COMPAS-Youth Assessment. In response to your feedback regarding youth adjudication rates and the COMPAS risk models, scale sets for the Youth assessment are being adjusted. Beginning with the next COMPAS release, a sample group of youth assessments will be collected by our vendor, NorthPointe. This sample set will be used to norm the assessment on Wisconsin's youth, and any Wisconsin-specific characteristics these youth might have would be reflected in potential changes to the scales' cut points (for example, lower number of adjudications). Additionally, COMPAS will continue to offer multiple versions of the youth assessment, including the detention screener, a short risk screener, and of course the full COMPAS-Youth assessment.

As always, the Department encourages the use of validated risk/need assessment to inform decisions for all justice-involved youth. We support this evidence-based practice regardless of the specific tool chosen to do so.

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