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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ADVANCED TRAINING IN SENTENCING REFORM HELD FOR  
ILLINOIS JUDGES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS IN JUSTICE  
SYSTEM**

Twenty Illinois judges received advanced training recently in evidence-based practices—a sentencing reform tool aimed at reducing recidivism by tailoring probationary conditions to risk factors identified in an offender’s life.

A total of 140 persons, including probation officers and treatment providers from around the state, attended the two-day advanced training seminar entitled “EBP: Moving From Principles to Application.” The event was held in Oak Brook August 26 and August 27.

The faculty included several nationally known experts on the subject, and one of the highlights of the symposium was an illustration of evidence-based practices in a mock trial setting.

“I believe that Illinois is in the forefront of sentencing reform and in reducing the rate of recidivism among criminal offenders,” said Cynthia Y. Cobbs, Director of the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts, sponsor of the seminar. “Up until now, we’ve offered training to judges, probation officers and others in the criminal justice community on what evidence-based practices means and its relevance to sentencing and reducing rates of recidivism for criminal offenders.

“This seminar was unique. It was an interactive, two-day event which offered an opportunity for judges and probation officers and services providers to actually identify evidence-based practices in the mock-trial setting with three current or former judges who have substantial knowledge about sentencing reform efforts around the country and the value of evidence-based practices in sentencing.”

The three judges among the faculty who participated in the mock trial were Donald Hudson, Chief Circuit Judge for the 16<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit in Illinois which includes DeKalb, Kane and Kendall counties; the Honorable Roger K. Warren, a former trial judge in Sacramento, Calif., for 20 years who currently serves as the director of the national sentencing reform project

**MORE**

## **Advanced Training in Sentencing Reform Add One**

for the National Center for State Courts; and the Honorable Ron Reinstein, retired judge of the Superior Court of Arizona who serves as a judicial consultant for the Arizona Supreme Court and was appointed by the Chief Justice of Arizona to serve as Director of the Center for Evidence-Based Sentencing.

According to Judges Hudson, Warren, Reinstein and others in the field, evidence-based practices (EBP) are principles that are empirically proven to reduce recidivism and improve offender outcomes through social learning approaches, required treatment programs, cognitive behavioral programs, educational strategies and family-based therapies.

They are most appropriately applied to criminal offenders who are eligible to be sentenced to probation and whose risk factors of repeating criminal behavior can be targeted and treated. Cheryl Barrett, Assistant Director of Probation Services for the AOIC, said when properly implemented research shows that evidence-based practices can reduce offender recidivism rates up to 30 percent.

“It is truly a privilege to work under the leadership of Director Cobbs and be one of several individuals who contributed to the development of the Advanced Training Seminary on EBP designed for judges, probation personnel and service providers,” said Ms. Barrett. “The challenge before us was to take the theories of EBP and provide concrete practical application for the participants. The interactive sessions allowed for each participant group to learn the various roles that each play in the implementation of EBP.”

Illinois’ experience with EBP dates to the 1990s when the Administrative Office designed and hosted a training session for probation and court service leaders with renowned international researchers, Drs. Paul Gendreau and Donald Andrews.

In 2003, the National Institute of Corrections, upon application by the AOIC, selected Illinois as one of two states to receive a three-year technical assistance grant to further implement EBP. The AOIC was the lead project coordinator and worked in collaboration with the NIC and the Crime and Justice Institute and selected six pilot sites that would serve as an EBP prototype for other trial courts in the state.

The pilot sites were: the Cook County Adult Probation Department; the Sangamon County Adult Probation Department; the Adams County Probation Department; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Judicial Circuit in southeastern Illinois; the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit which encompasses DuPage County; and the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit which encompasses Lake County.

Director Cobbs said she hopes the interactive training held in Oak Brook will be replicated to include more Illinois judges and stakeholders in the criminal justice system in order to fully implement EBP in Illinois. To that end, she said, procedures will be established so the six pilot sites in Illinois will begin to share with other jurisdictions in the state their own experiences in implementing EBP.

**MORE**

**Advanced Training in Sentencing Reform  
Add Two**

“I am inspired by the perseverance and leadership demonstrated by so many of our judges, probation personnel, justice and community stakeholders for their work to better understand and implement EBP, said Ms. Cobbs. “This work is not an event, it is a journey; and the idea of less crime, fewer victims and safer communities is well worth the trip.”

The Oak Brook seminar was supported by a grant obtained by the AOIC from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Illinois judges who attended the program were Kathleen Alling of Jefferson County, Duane L. Bailey of Madison County, James R. Harvey of Effingham County, John P. Coady of Christian County, Michael D. Clary of Vermilion County, Richard T. Mitchell of Morgan County, Thomas L. Brownfield of Mason County, Scott Shipplett Knox County, Richard Grawey; Charles M. Feeney of Woodford County; William P. Balestri of LaSalle County, Jeffrey W. O’Connor of Rock Island County, Patricia Piper Golden of Kane County, Fernando Engelsma of Winnebago County, Christopher C. Starck of Lake County, Brian P. Hughes of Lake County, Allen Anderson of Kane County, Charles Reynard of McLean County, Elizabeth Sexton of DuPage County, and Donald Hudson of Kane County.

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**(FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312-793-2323)**