

REMARKS

OF

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OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

EXECUTIVE SESSION ON EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AND POLICY

ON

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Thank you, Cabell. I'm glad to be here to help close out what I'm sure has been an interesting and productive two days. I want to thank Cabell and his staff for bringing everyone together to continue these fruitful discussions around evidence-based programs and policies. My thanks, also, to the staff at Justice Research and Statistics Association for their work and for their partnership. And, of course, my thanks to Denise and her staff for their leadership at the Office of Justice Programs.

I want to commend all of you – everyone in this room – for the outstanding work you've done to advance evidence-based planning and decision-making in your states. I think it's fair to say we've made tremendous progress since the initial focus group of agency administrators met four years ago. We've held regional conferences, provided technical assistance in more than 20 states, launched a terrific Web site, and engaged in a continuous dialogue on the issues surrounding evidence-based programs.

And we're seeing some exciting work in the states that I know you've heard about this week and some of you have led. For example, West Virginia established its Justice Center for Evidence-Based Practice to support research and translate that research for use by policymakers and practitioners. This is very much in line with the work we're doing in OJP through CrimeSolutions.gov.

In Pennsylvania, using the Communities That Care Model, more than 100 evidence-based program sites have been set up throughout the state, and there's now a Resource Center for Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs and Practices that helps support local evidence-based programs.

And in Colorado, the Evidence-Based Practices Implementation for Capacity Program – which started from a Byrne-JAG grant – is working to build agency capacity by training practitioners and managers in evidence-based practices.

These are just three great examples of the good work going on in the states – and there are many others I could mention. Suffice it to say, evidence-based planning is taking hold across the country, and you are leading the way.

But as I know you'll all agree, embedding an evidence-based mindset in our programming and planning is a long-term proposition. It's vitally important that we formalize planning and that we be strategic in our designs. And it's critical that we focus on the needs of communities as we do this. This process needs to involve local stakeholders – and not only involve them, but be driven by them. So it's important that we – those of us in OJP and you, as SAAs and SAC directors – exercise our leadership to solicit their participation and help leverage resources. You are central to helping advance this long-term goal.

I'm pleased that Denise and her team have taken this on as a top priority and are working closely with the National Criminal Justice Association and JRSA to help you accomplish your goals. I want you all to know that I share their commitment, as does the entire leadership of OJP and the Department. Evidence-based programming is a top priority of mine, and of leaders

across OJP. Every bureau is working to apply evidence-based principles – from law enforcement to victims to juvenile justice.

I'm particularly appreciative of BJA's leadership. BJA has been working with our National Institute of Justice for several years to generate new evidence about what works in community corrections and reentry through demonstration field experiments. They've also helped integrate research into program models such as drug and other problem solving courts, offender reentry programs funded through the Second Chance Act, and our new place-based, community-oriented Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation program. As BJA builds these new program models, I appreciate your ongoing support through the use of JAG funds to continue these demonstration programs and through training at the state level. This truly is a partnership between the Department of Justice, the states, and local communities.

At OJP, our Evidence Integration Initiative is also going strong, working to strengthen our base of evidence and get that information out to the field in a way that is useful to practitioners and policymakers. Our CrimeSolutions.gov Web site now includes more than 240 programs, and the OJP Diagnostic Center is now providing intensive assistance to half a dozen jurisdictions to help them address complex public safety challenges. We have fully engaged with the OJP Science Advisory Board – made up of some of the leading criminologists in the country – and regularly consider their recommendations as we move this agenda forward.

But if we truly hope to extend the reach of evidence-based programs and policies, we'll need your continued leadership. We need you to keep us informed of developments and trends in the field so we can determine how to make our programs responsive. And we depend on you to let us know what's working – and not working – so we can share that with others across the country. We rely on you as a key source of knowledge and insight about evidence-based practices and about our progress in collaborating with and support your efforts. If there is something more – or less – that we should be doing, we want and need to hear it.

As we begin the second term of this Administration, I'm excited about what lies ahead. We've built significant momentum, we've seen the incredible value of evidence-based programs and policies to the field, and we continue to have the support of an Attorney General who understands the importance of the work we're doing. I look forward to building on that momentum, and to making evidence-based programming a staple of our work in criminal justice.

Thank you.

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