

# Wisconsin Evidence-Based Decision Making Summit

January 28-29, 2014

## Participant Evaluation Results

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Prepared by the Center for Effective Public Policy

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

Since 2010, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) has supported the implementation of local Evidence-Based Decision Making (EBDM) initiatives in Eau Claire and Milwaukee Counties, as well as five other communities across the nation. The purpose of NIC's assistance was to test and implement the Evidence-Based Decision Making Framework, which conceptualizes a criminal justice system guided by goals defined and shared by policymakers, decisions informed by research evidence, a collaborative policy development process, and ongoing data collection and analysis. NIC has recently launched the next phase of the Initiative—the development and pilot of statewide capacity building and implementation of a Statewide EBDM Protocol. The conduct of the Wisconsin EBDM Summit represented the first step in the expansion of the EBDM Initiative.

### **Purpose of the Wisconsin EBDM Summit**

NIC partnered with the State of Wisconsin to conduct the Wisconsin EBDM Summit. The Summit was designed to address the importance of statewide evidence-based decision making to achieving improved criminal justice outcomes and reducing the harm that crime causes Wisconsin's communities. It provided state and local officials with the foundational information needed to consider engaging in a statewide EBDM effort.

Specifically, the purposes of the Summit were to:

- Define EBDM as an approach to sound justice system policy and practice,
- Share information about the EBDM Framework, the evidence that supports it, and contemporary research findings that support evidence-based risk reduction strategies,
- Emphasize the importance of a shared vision and goals for achieving harm reduction in our communities,
- Present a roadmap for achieving statewide implementation of EBDM, including the state-local partnerships necessary to carry out such an approach,
- Define the activities already underway in Wisconsin that support an EBDM approach, as well as areas of potential advancement, and
- Describe NIC's next steps in its statewide EBDM Initiative.

### **Summit Participants**

Approximately 250 local and state officials from Wisconsin attended the Summit, representing the State Criminal Justice Coordinating Council and 21 county-based, multidisciplinary teams. In addition, EBDM project staff and representatives from the local EBDM sites served as faculty and resource persons during the event.

### **This Report**

The National Institute of Corrections and the Wisconsin Department of Justice sought feedback from the participants of the *Wisconsin Evidence-Based Decision Making Summit*, which took place on January 28-29, 2014. Participants were asked to complete an online survey following the event. Responses were collected between February 20 and March 12, 2014. The responses from 105 participants (out of 250 participants; a 42% response rate) are summarized in this report.

## RESULTS SUMMARY

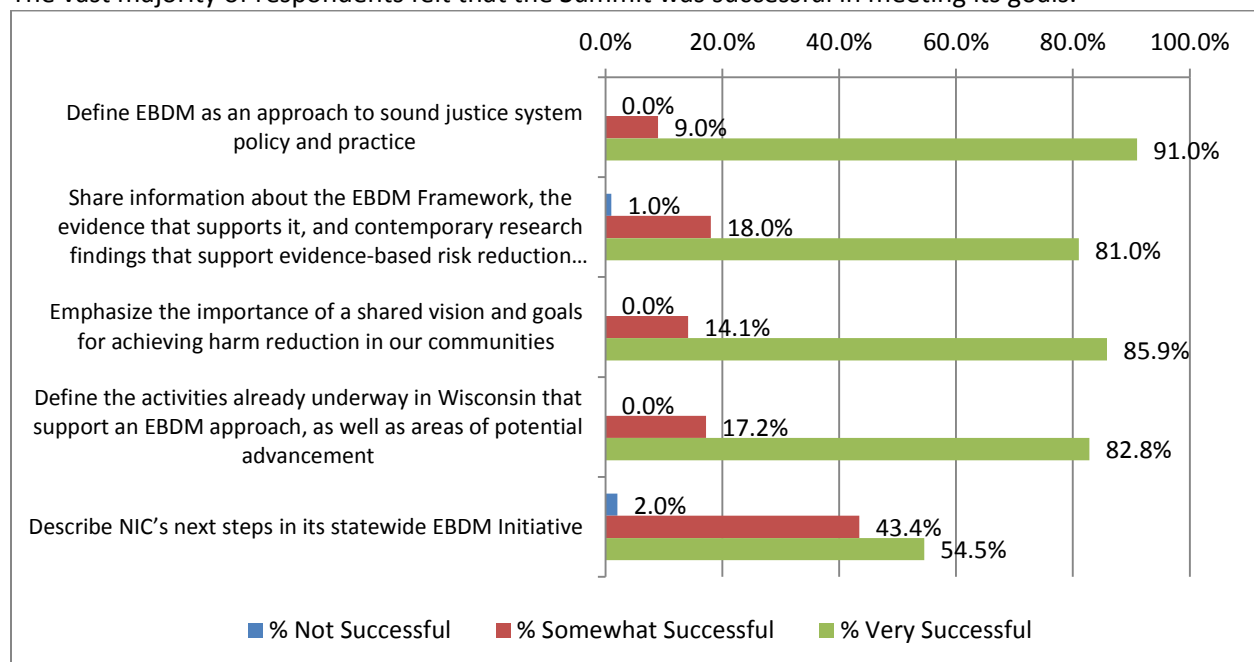
### Survey Respondents

A wide range of criminal justice and other county stakeholders responded to this survey including court personnel, criminal justice coordinators, defense counsel, law enforcement, prosecutors, state corrections staff, pretrial professionals and behavioral health services.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Behavioral Health Services (e.g., mental health, substance abuse)	5.1%	5
City/County Management/Executive	3.1%	3
County Probation	1.0%	1
Courts	14.3%	14
Criminal Justice Coordinator	11.2%	11
Defense	15.3%	15
Law Enforcement	7.1%	7
Parole	2.0%	2
Pretrial	2.0%	2
Prosecution	9.2%	9
Sheriff/Jail	2.0%	2
State Corrections	13.3%	13
Victim Advocacy	2.0%	2
Other (Human Services, Elected Official, Tribal, Program Evaluation, etc.)	12.2%	12
<b>Total:</b>		<b>98</b>

### Success in Reaching Summit Goals

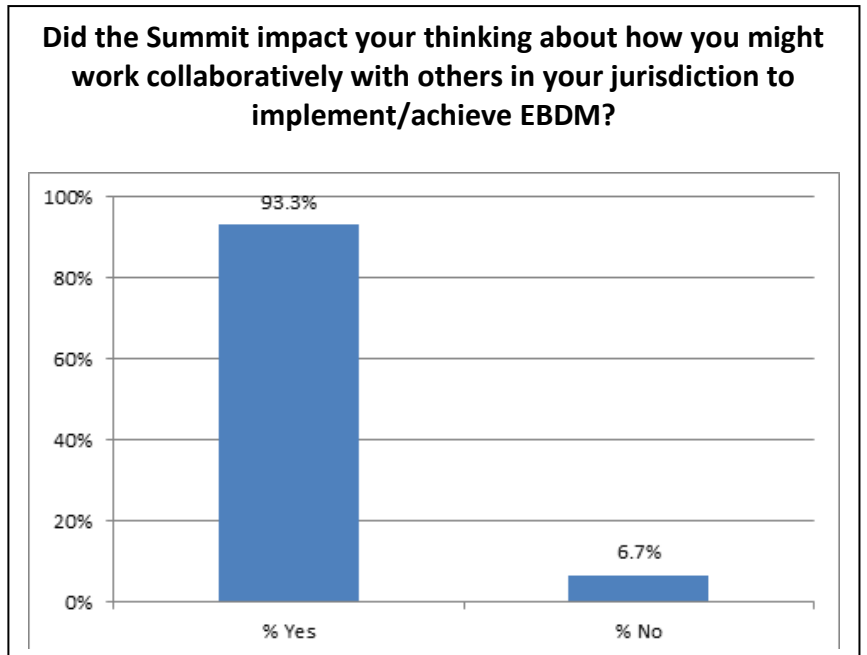
The vast majority of respondents felt that the Summit was successful in meeting its goals.



### Impact of Summit on Individuals

Respondents noted that there were many take away points from the Summit that they will be able to use in their work. Some of these take away points included:

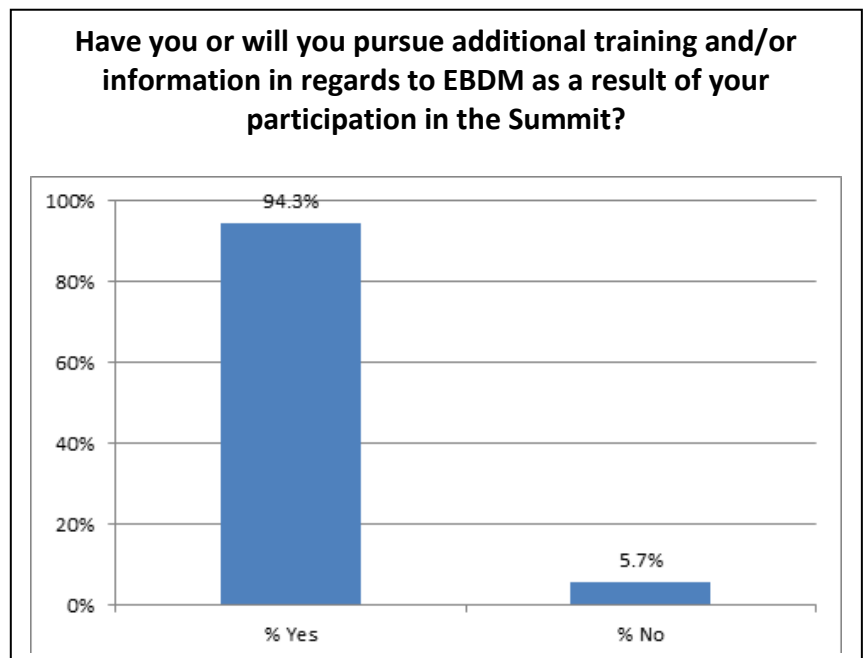
- the study of data and research will better inform criminal justice stakeholder decisions,
- collaboration is a necessary part of EBDM and contributes to cost savings overall,
- there is a need for valid risk and needs assessment,
- research should enhance the judgment of decision makers rather than replace it, and
- the sustainability of system changes is difficult but can be achieved.



Many respondents stated that the experiences of various stakeholders in other counties, particularly those from Milwaukee and Eau Claire, were helpful illustrations of how to implement EBDM.

The following summarizes respondents' answers when asked about the impact that the Summit had on *them as individuals*:

- The overwhelming majority (93.3%) agreed that the Summit impacted their thinking about collaboration and how they will work with others in their jurisdiction to achieve EBDM<sup>1</sup>.
- Most respondents (94.3%) planned to or had already pursued additional training or information (in March 2014) in regards to EBDM since attending the Summit. Many noted that they already had or intended to reach out to individuals in Milwaukee and Eau Claire Counties to gather more information about those sites' experiences (e.g., use of the proxy, involvement of the



<sup>1</sup> The respondents who answered 'no' indicated their response was a reflection of the fact that they were already working collaboratively prior to the Summit.

district attorneys in these sites).

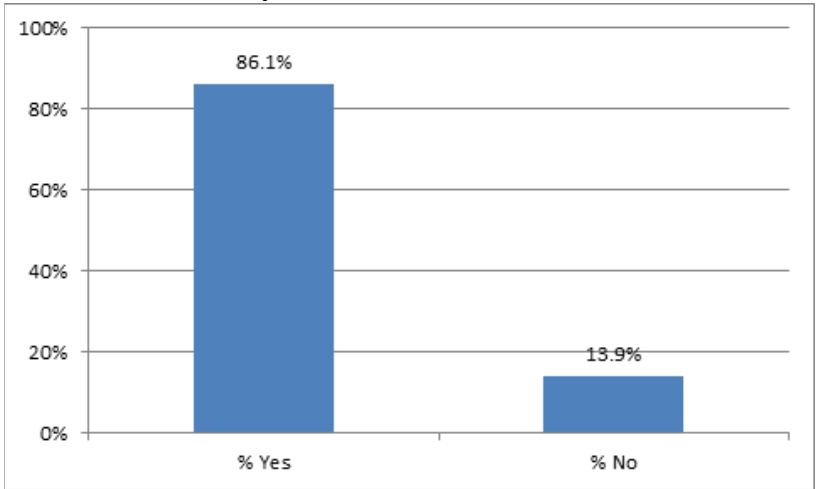
- A number of respondents noted that their CJCCs will be accessing the various materials from NIC's website, the EBDM One Less website, and the Starter Kit in particular to help guide them in their efforts.

### Impact of Summit on Wisconsin Teams or Jurisdictions

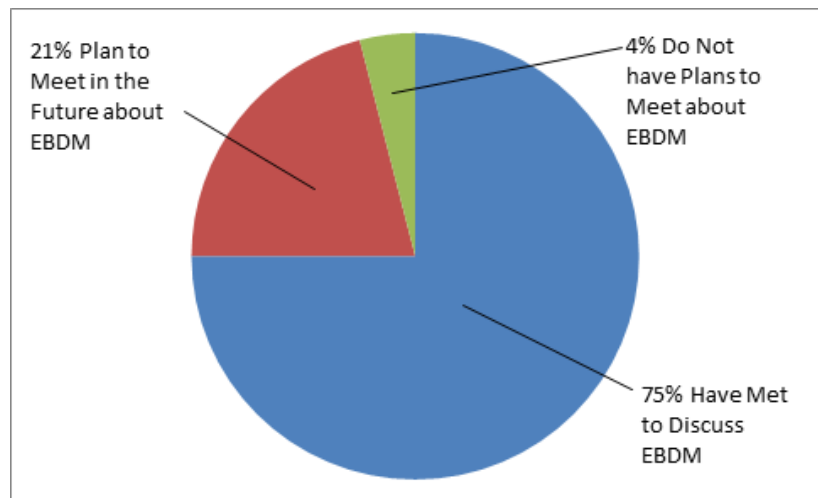
The following summarizes the respondents' answers when asked about the impact that the Summit had on their *team or jurisdiction*:

- Most respondents (86.1%) indicated that the Summit impacted the way that their team thinks about how it might work collaboratively with other teams to implement EBDM. A number of respondents noted plans to reach out to other counties to share information and support one another in regards to EBDM.
- Some respondents indicated that they had already worked collaboratively with others prior to the Summit, however the event gave them an opportunity to refocus their efforts.
- About 75% of the respondents noted that stakeholders in their jurisdiction have already met as a team since the Summit to discuss their interest in pursuing EBDM as an approach. Twenty-one percent plan to meet in the future. Only 4% do not have plans to meet about EBDM.

#### Did the Summit impact your team's thinking about how it might work collaboratively with other teams (state/local) to implement/achieve EBDM?



#### Jurisdiction or team's plans to meet about EBDM as an approach to their work:



### *Select Quotes from Survey Respondents on the Impact of the Summit*

- The Summit energized our county into pursuing the EBDM Framework and giving the major stakeholders the basic foundation to start moving in that direction. We will be following the Framework to begin our descent into making our county truly EBDM.
- I thought the Summit did an excellent job of providing a roadmap for where the Criminal Justice System, as a whole, is going. Courts and other justice system partners are not immune from the oncoming "big data" and "analytics" revolution.
- There were many points that I thought I understood prior to the Summit that became much clearer and more deeply understood following the two-day event. I now understand the importance of building a unified CJCC and working together to build a "vision" that best fits the goals of our local criminal justice system. I also see the value in obtaining data and using it to continually modify the program, so that optimum services for all involved are obtained.
- The summit provided reassurance that the same roadblocks I'm running into with my local stakeholders are the same ones it took others time to overcome. I need to be persistent in my beliefs.
- We already have a CJCC; however, nothing much has been accomplished recently. The summit was enlightening and really energized our CJCC.
- I found it interesting that different jurisdictions used jail staff and police/deputies to perform a proxy or quick assessment of offenders. I think a better understanding of EBDM by all involved will assure that program participants will receive the best treatment and lessen their likelihood of reoffending.
- I do think our key stakeholders walked away with more of an investment in implementing EBDM. Our elected officials were initially reluctant to consider wide ranging or systemwide changes.
- It really helped forge our resolve because we were starting to feel very frustrated with the amount of negativity we were running into with the other stakeholders. The presenters all touched on the fact that they each had to push through those same blockades and they often took years to do it.
- We made contacts with other counties at the summit and will communicate with them in the future about possible collaboration in order to maximize the efficient use of resources.

### Action Steps Taken as a Result of the Summit

A number of respondents shared the steps they have taken as a result of the Summit. Common steps included:

- Meeting with other team members that attended the Summit to determine/finalize action plans in regards to EBDM,
- Sharing information learned with other stakeholders in the jurisdiction who did not attend the Summit (one stakeholder noted in particular was law enforcement),
- Developing a system map,
- Forming a subcommittee of the CJCC dedicated to EBDM, and
- Exploring the applicability of using a pretrial assessment tool, proxy at the arrest stage, and/or diversion programs or other strategies to reduce the involvement of low risk offenders in the system.

### *Notable Action Steps Taken as a Result of Participation in the Summit*

- We had an initial debriefing session with our entire CJCC. Consensus confirmed the group is willing and wanting to move down the EBDM path. There will be meetings scheduled with the individual stakeholders to further that commitment and the CJCC's executive committee will begin meeting to start following the EBDM Framework.
- Conference attendees from our county have met multiple times since the Summit, and we are arranging to reactivate (for lack of a better term) our local CJCC to work towards implementation of EBDM practices.
- Our small group has met twice since the Summit and each member is assigned a discussion topic with specific groups. All those meetings will have taken place prior to our CJCC meeting in a couple weeks.
- We are mapping our system and reviewing decision points at which we could implement EBDM.
- A resolution will be considered by our board to form a CJCC, which will pursue EBDM.
- We have a resolution pending to convert one of our committees to a full CJCC, with many more stakeholders involved. We have advertised and are in the process of hiring a Justice Coordinator.
- I have personally met with the District Attorney and our CJCC staff advisor on a number of occasions since the training. I thought the training was valuable and I couldn't have gotten it anywhere else. Thank you.
- Our Chief Judge is energized. Meetings with those of us who attended have been held alone and with other county stakeholders. We are attempting to put together a meeting with local law enforcement jurisdictions. It has been very rewarding to see forward movement.
- We have met to discuss the EBDM Summit, developed a power point with overview topics of the summit to present to the CJCC members unable to attend, and are in the process of forming an EBDM policy making team as a subgroup of our CJCC. We have had two meetings and another is scheduled.