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**REPORT ON IMPLEMENTING DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE SERVICES  
SYSTEM OF GRADUATED RESPONSES  
2014 Ch.496/497, MSAR 9738**

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**INTRODUCTION**

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The report on Implementing System of Graduated Responses was required by Senate Bill 536 / House Bill 604 (Chapters 496/497, 2014 Laws of Maryland) enacted during the Maryland General Assembly's 2013 session. This legislation directed the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to report to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee on the implementation of a system of graduated responses for youth under the jurisdiction of DJS.

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**Department of Juvenile Services System of Graduated Responses**

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**I. Overview**

Chapters 496/497, 2014 Laws of Maryland, required that DJS submit a report on the implementation of a system of graduated responses for children under the jurisdiction of DJS. Chapters 496/497 defined graduated response to include a program that:

- ✓ provides an accountability-based series of sanctions, including incentives, treatment, and services, applicable to children within the juvenile justice system;
- ✓ is administered to hold children accountable for their actions and to protect communities from the effects of juvenile delinquency by providing appropriate sanctions for every act for which a child is adjudicated delinquent, and;
- ✓ encourages law-abiding behavior, and by preventing subsequent involvement in the juvenile justice system.

**II. The Approach**

Upon passage of the legislation DJS set out to create a standardized approach to manage youth behavior while youth are court ordered to community supervision (probation) or pre-adjudication community detention. DJS has taken a number of steps to move forward with the development and implementation of a graduated responses system.

- ✓ Held focus groups around the state with case managers and DJS management about needs, potential barriers, and what is already being done.
- ✓ Conducted a site visit to Santa Cruz, CA with a delegation of DJS regional directors, and representatives from the Office of the Public Defender, the State's Attorney's Office, the Judiciary, law enforcement, and services providers to learn about their system of graduated responses and incentives.
- ✓ Issued a statewide survey to case managers about practices and understanding of graduated responses.
- ✓ DJS team worked statewide and locally to develop incentive and sanction grids, infraction guides, training curriculum, and training needs.
- ✓ DJS team consulted with national partners to develop the graduate response program and training materials.

Through the efforts listed above, DJS developed a graduated responses program titled "Accountability and Incentive Management" (AIM). The AIM program incorporates the following goals:

- ✓ AIM reserves the most extreme sanctions for the behaviors that have the most impact and concern for public safety.
- ✓ AIM provides case managers a range of options to manage behavior for youth.
- ✓ AIM provides a consistent and fair approach while providing flexibility to handle special cases.
- ✓ AIM provides a system of graduated responses that will be applied in a certain, immediate, and fair manner while balancing for appropriate intensity and tailoring to individual youth needs and community resources.

### III. Implementation of AIM

DJS developed an implementation strategy that will ensure that DJS staff is prepared to effectively utilize the AIM program and tools. Additionally, the strategy includes key components of training, research and evaluation plans, data collection, and technology development.

#### Implementation Plan and Timeline

- ✓ Training for Regional Directors and County Leaders – Fall 2014
- ✓ Pilot Site Training - Fall 2014
- ✓ Pilot Site Begin using AIM Sanction and Infraction program – Winter 2016
- ✓ Additional Site Training and Piloting – Winter 2016 to Spring 2016
- ✓ Incentive Development – Winter 2016 to Spring 2016
- ✓ Stakeholder Training – Spring 2016
- ✓ Statewide AIM (Sanction and Incentive) Implementation – July 1, 2016
- ✓ Statewide Technical Program Implementation – Jul 2016

In order to deliver the most effective program a period of piloting AIM in various jurisdictions was necessary to ensure DJS business practices and the AIM tools were performing as anticipated. The AIM program will be implemented State wide by July 1, 2016. Following implementation, a series of continued training will be provided and continued research and evaluations will be conducted to make certain the goals of the AIM program are being met.

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### **Conclusion**

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DJS is committed to implement a system of graduated responses for youth placed by the Court on community supervision (probation) or pre-adjudication community detention with fidelity. The AIM program will be continually researched and evaluated to ensure that the goal improving outcomes for youth on community supervision or pre-adjudication community detention are met.