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THE EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY INSTITUTE AT JUDGE BAKER CHILDREN'S CENTER HOSTS POLICY FORUM ON JUVENILE JUSTICE WITHIN MASSACHUSETTS

- *Held in partnership with State Representative Kay Khan and State Senator Sal DiDomenico, the policy forum will present key findings from the policy brief “Promoting Positive Outcomes for Justice Involved Youth: Understanding and Addressing the Behavioral, Emotional, and Developmental Needs of Justice Involved Youth.” The brief includes a review of relevant literature, input from key stakeholders, a review of current juvenile justice policies, systems and practices in Massachusetts, a review of national juvenile justice best practices, and offers recommendations for the Commonwealth.*
- *Experts in the fields of adolescent development, juvenile justice and public policy will engage in a facilitated discussion on the importance of understanding and addressing the behavioral, emotional and developmental needs of justice involved youth, notable accomplishments in Massachusetts, and next steps for the Commonwealth.*

BOSTON, MA (January 10, 2019) – The Evidence-Based Policy Institute at Judge Baker Children’s Center (Judge Baker), a national leader in children’s mental health, is hosting a statewide policy forum in partnership with State Representative Kay Khan and State Senator Sal DiDomenico that will examine the continuum of services and support available in Massachusetts to justice involved youth and their families, and how reforms at the policy, systems and practice levels can promote positive youth outcomes and reduce social and economic costs to communities.

The forum will take place on Thursday, February 7, 2019 from 11:30am-1:00pm at the Massachusetts State House in Boston.

“It is well recognized that justice involved youth are at higher risk for an array of long term emotional, behavioral, social and future employment issues,” said Robert P. Franks, PhD, President of Judge Baker. “In many cases, these challenges reduce the likelihood that youth will

thrive, resulting in enormous social and financial costs for the Commonwealth. Massachusetts has an extraordinary opportunity to be a national leader in juvenile justice reforms by creating a continuum of care prioritizing evidence-based policies and practices that support youth in their homes and communities.”

Held in partnership with Khan and DiDomenico, the policy panel will identify the key findings in a new policy brief entitled “Promoting Positive Outcomes for Justice Involved Youth: Understanding and Addressing the Behavioral, Emotional, and Developmental Needs of Justice Involved Youth.” The panel will include experts in the fields of adolescent development, juvenile justice and public policy discussing the importance of addressing the behavioral, emotional and developmental needs of justice involved youth. Panelists and forum attendees will explore the impact that contact and lasting involvement with the juvenile justice system can have on youth, families and the Commonwealth at large.

“Juvenile justice reform has been a primary focus of mine and thanks to the work done recently in 2018 with criminal justice legislation and the work of many organizations we are seeing remarkable successes in that area,” said Representative Khan. “Our commitment to the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable youth means critically examining our approaches and always striving to improve. By utilizing data-driven, evidence-based approaches, we can ensure justice involved youth have the necessary supports and services to lead healthy lives.”

Diversion, community-based services, and positive youth development, along with evidence-based policies and practices, can address underlying behavioral, emotional, and developmental needs that contribute to justice system involvement. Reforms at the policy, systems, and practice levels can promote positive youth outcomes; ease the substantial social and economic costs to communities; and likely lead to significant return on investment and overall cost-savings.

“It is clear that my focus on supporting healthy youth development, across systems and age ranges, is inextricably connected to the work being done in juvenile justice,” said Senator DiDomenico. “A thriving future for the Commonwealth requires we unite across youth-serving systems and make decisions that maximize the likelihood that youth will prosper.”

The policy forum is open to the public but seating is limited. For more information, visit <https://jbcc.harvard.edu/juvenile-justice-policy-forum>.

About Judge Baker Children’s Center

An affiliate of Harvard Medical School, Judge Baker Children’s Center is a nationally recognized children’s mental health organization dedicated to improving the quality of mental health care for children and families. Named in honor of Harvey Humphrey Baker, the first judge appointed to the Boston Juvenile Court, Judge Baker opened its doors in 1917 and has been serving the children and families of greater Boston for almost 100 years. The multi-faceted organization provides the very best in evidence-based practices for children and families struggling with a range of behavioral, emotional, educational, and mental health issues. Judge Baker is dedicated to improving the lives of children and families by bridging the gap between science and practice to improve access to the highest quality care in community-based settings.

JUDGE BAKER CHILDREN’S CENTER: Improving Care. Changing Lives.

Additional information about Judge Baker can be found at <http://jbcc.harvard.edu/>