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**JIR Letter**

# **MYCIDS COMPLIANCE**

On May 26, 2015, the Supreme Court mandated by order that all youth courts in Mississippi “implement MYCIDS in order to develop a data base that accurately represents the timeliness of court hearings and court orders statewide.” The order provided that:

- all court orders, petitions, summons and notices were to be prepared in MYCIDS,
- all documents filed in a case be scanned into MYCIDS and
- that the courts timely input all intake, custody, referral, petition and hearing data.

The order further required MDCPS’ cooperation and tied court support monies to compliance with this order. A Legislative mandate was also enacted to require the same.

The Order clearly establishes MYCIDS as the **only official court file**. The purpose of this letter is to ensure that all information entered in the MYCIDS case are complete and accurate. The court file must be. We have provided you with order templates designed to assist you in ensuring that all necessary findings have been made and properly entered. Having such a system will allow us to track critical data points and factors which previously has been undiscoverable. The process will allow us and you to develop crucial information for the court, legislators, funders and prospective funding foundations.

Early on, we knew there would be challenges developing MYCIDS into a reliable data base for youth court statistics. Some courts were coming on for the first time. Others had just used the system in certain instances and not others. None had ever been required before. Early data findings produced were almost universally condemned as incorrect. Quite frankly, we did have serious issues both on the state level and the local level. In fact, over the past several years we have been in the process of validating our systems.

Many of you have been critical partners in assisting in pointing out the MYCIDS deficiencies both on the local and state level. Each of those communications has allowed us to develop adjustments with a focus on developing a system which would accurately deliver critical data. Accurate data is crucial for funding justification, both state and foundations, and services direction and for reporting to our

communities and state the hard work being performed in our youth courts. I was a consistent counsel to the court to forebear any judgments on the effectiveness of individual courts based on this data until the validation process had been completed.

We have now just passed the fifth anniversary of the execution of the order. Ample opportunity has been given for courts to share their concerns about the accuracy of MYCIDS. It is time for the validation process to end and we begin to assert that the data gleaned from this system is accurate. Of course, we are open to issues that are encountered moving forward. MYCIDS is a living system with regular updates to better serve the needs of the court and the public.

Most of you have faithfully embraced the mandate of the court and are accurately entering your court's information. MYCIDS today is far closer to that "accurate" data base than it has ever been.

However, from time to time, MYCIDS is subject to general criticism from others outside the judicial system as inaccurate and unreliable. Few of these criticisms are substantiated with specific information to assist us in determining a cause of the alleged shortcoming. When they are, the discovered reason almost always relates back to inaccurate input into the system on the local level or simple unwillingness to participate in the system.

As to unwillingness to participate in the system, that conduct was specifically countermanded five years ago. Failure to participate, in addition to other sanctions, may result in a loss of youth court support funds.

As to inaccurate input into the system, all of us are human and make mistakes. However, when the mistakes have been corrected by training and reappear as a pattern, such activity is unacceptable and also places support funds at risk.

Mississippi is far ahead of other states in addressing head on the challenges of child welfare as a state. Most states are mired in local culture and custom. MYCIDS has contributed to supplying Mississippi with a system which promotes uniformity and compliance with state and federal mandates. As a result, families and children are better served. In national meetings, other states have marveled that we have developed such a system.

But we still have challenges. The sad truth is that if there are those outliers that do not properly embrace and apply MYCIDS. This reality continues to compromise the information produced by MYCIDS.

Thus, we are requesting that every judge/court do the following:

1. **Cases:** That all cases be created through the MYCIDS system and no case be developed outside of MYCIDS. A common complaint we have heard is that some courts carry on business without any compliance with MYCIDS. There is no way that MYCIDS can ever become an accurate data base if this practice is permitted. This is in direct conflict with the Supreme Court Order.
2. **Pleadings/Orders**—the judge ensure that **all** orders, pleadings, motions, processes, etc. be created in MYCIDS. We have received several reports that there are orders which have been entered, supplied parties and enforced that have never been scanned or otherwise entered into MYCIDS.

3. **E-signature Orders**—create your pleadings and order within MYCIDS from the templates provided. Then e-sign those orders. We are aware that some judges prefer to ink sign their orders. You are implored to convert to e-signing. If you persist in “ink signing” then it should be scanned into MYCIDS AND it is essential that you also generate a e-signed order. The importance of the additional e-signed order is that it contains several data points that we and you can track to develop reports that provide information that assist in developing resources and services in our communities. It is impossible to follow those data points on a scanned document.
4. **Associated Persons**—please ensure that ALL the persons associated with the case are properly recorded on this data point. The Parent’s Representation Task Force has recently attempted to develop statistics of Mississippi indigent families who have been provided representation in court across the state. The data point to measure this statistic is found in the associated persons designations. There was some concern that our data may not be accurate. Again, if this is not recorded properly, the statistics are skewed—garbage in, garbage out. Please impress upon your administration that even if they do not understand the reason for a particular category in MYCIDS, please enter the information accurately.
5. **Understand MYCIDS Applications/Monitor your administration**—become astute in how MYCIDS works. Please monitor your personnel who input the data to ensure that the process is properly completed.

If together we do these five simple steps, I am convinced we will have an accurate data collection system second to none in the country and MYCIDS will accurately reflect what is going on in our courts.

I have asked Rex Mohon to regularly supply me with “red flags” that arise in his research which indicate a concern or emerging concern in certain counties. Upon receipt, I am committed to working with you individually to alleviate the issues. All of us want our courts to be the most responsive and effective possible.

Please continue to keep you and your court’s parties and personnel safe as we battle this virus.

Respectfully yours,

John Hudson  
Jurist in Residence