

Committee on Mental Health and the Justice System | Minutes

Monday, April 20, 2020

Virtual meeting

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Present (telephonically): Kent Batty (Chair), Mary Lou Brncik, Amelia Cramer, Shelley Curran, Jim Dunn, Hon. Elizabeth Finn, Hon. Michael Hintze, Josephine Jones, Natalie Jones, Dianna Kalandros, Cynthia Kuhn, Michael Lipscomb, James McDougall, Dr. Carol Olson, Ronald Overholt, Beya Thayer, Proxy for Chief Deputy David Rhodes, J.J. Rico, Dr. Michael Shafer, Hon. Barbara Spencer, Hon. Christopher Staring, Hon. Fanny Steinlage

Absent/Excused: Brad Carlyon, Chief Chris Magnus, Kristin McManus, Paul Thomas

Guests/Presenters: Alex Demyan, Tamaria Gammage, Dana Flannery

Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Staff: Theresa Barrett, Don Jacobson, Stacy Reinstein, Diana Tovar

Regular Business

Approval of Minutes

Members were asked to approve minutes from March 23, 2020, noting they were in the meeting packet and provided electronically in advance of the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Cramer. The motion was seconded by Judge Staring. Motion was approved unanimously.

National Center for State Courts: Mental Health Update

Ms. Tobias from the National Center for State Courts informed the committee about a new CCJ/COSCA mental health task force which has been created, as a continuation of the work that has been taking place over the last year. Existing priorities underway will continue, along with new areas such as child welfare, family court, and partnerships. The Committee was invited to provide NCSC any priority areas for consideration.

Mental Health/ Justice Training Initiative

Ms. Reinstein shared that the goal of the training initiative is to provide judicial officers and court staff with an increased awareness and understanding of mental health, and of individuals living with mental health conditions in the courtroom setting. Additionally, the initiative will help to provide access to specific resources at the court's disposal which will assist in the delivery of services and improve the administration of justice for people living with mental health conditions.

In the current COVID-19 environment, judicial officers and partners in law enforcement and behavioral health are reporting an uptick in matters involving mental health concerns. These stakeholders project that our justice system will experience an even greater impact once courts are operating at 100 percent, as some mental health conditions are not being addressed through breaks

in continuity of care, service provision, and increases in substance use. As such, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) will be focusing on ensuring judicial officers receive training on mental health as well as trauma-informed courtroom, the impact of secondary trauma, and building leadership capacity of judges in a trauma/high-stress environment.

A “Library of Resources” will also be developed as an accompanying piece of the mental health training modules, featuring bench-specific information and resources that can be adjusted as law, policy, and practice changes.

Competency Practices Workgroup Recommendations

Ms. Kalandros shared the workgroup’s recommendation on expanding the use telehealth resources which was provided to committee members in the meeting packet.

Formal Action:

- A motion to move the recommendation on telehealth issues forward was made by Ms. Kalandros.
- The motion was seconded by Dr. Shafer.

Member Discussion:

- What other areas outside of competency are included in the recommendation on telehealth? Ms. Kalandros responded that telehealth also includes in custody, out of custody hearings, restorations, Rule 11, and competency pre-screens from city to superior courts.
- Use the telehealth recommendation as an opportunity to plug gaps and ensure access to technology resources.
- Expanding current telehealth capacity and improvements.
- Use telehealth as another opportunity to push forward data sharing between courts and all parties managing an individual.
- Maintain confidentiality across all telehealth platforms.
- Will there be reasonable accommodations related to disability? Telehealth contracts would need to follow best practices with respect to confidentiality and reasonable accommodations.

Ms. Kalandros shared the workgroup’s recommendation to formulate a university partnership which was provided to committee members in the meeting packet.

Formal Action:

- A motion to move the recommendation forward was made by Judge Hintze.
- The motion was seconded by Mr. McDougall.

Member Discussion:

- Insert caveat regarding funding and cost shifting when appropriate, along with opportunities for peer/family community to provide support without cost. and encourage the AOC and universities to move this forward.
- The University of Arizona just announced furloughs across the board, expect other universities to do so as well. Next academic term may not be the ideal climate to launch the collaborative.

Key Issues Workgroup Update

The Key Issues group has been moving forward with recommendations from the interim report, along with SMI criteria. The workgroup will meet prior to the next committee meeting to prepare and then present to the committee for further discussion and approval.

Committee New/ Updates

Mr. Batty shared that he and staff will put together a few recommendations for the NCSC on priorities, as requested by Patti Tobias during her update. Mr. Batty also mentioned that the committee will continue to move forward and present its recommendations to the standing committees and AJC. He noted that while it is better to be able to convene in person for discussions, the committee will continue to push forward through workgroups and committee discussions through current virtual means. Furthermore, Mr. Batty shared with the committee that the AOC has launched a new mental health website and video. He encouraged committee members to view.

In other news, Judge Hintze communicated that the AZ Court Care website along with the trifold brochure are receiving great feedback to provide to those in need without access to technology. Mr. Dunn from NAMI Arizona shared that August 28-30th there will be a Strengthening Arizona Communities Summit. It will be an intentional partnering approach and opportunity to discuss issues and establish connections.

Good of the Order / Call to the Public

None.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. by order of the chair.