



# Improving the Court and Community Response to Persons with Mental Illness and Co-Occurring Disorders Through Compassion and Hope



A Series of Five Online Learning and Planning Sessions



Office of Lt. Governor  
Juliana Stratton



SUPREME COURT OF ILLINOIS  
JUDICIAL COLLEGE

## Learning Session 2

Tuesday, October 6, 2020  
3:00-5:00 pm

### Mental Health Diversions from the Justice System through Leadership, Collaboration, Building Momentum, and Moving Forward with Lessons Learned from the Pandemic

**Welcome** Illinois Appellate Court Justice Kathryn Zenoff, 2<sup>nd</sup> District

**Welcome** Kim McCullough, Deputy Director of Community Outreach, Department of Healthcare and Family Services

**Speaker** Judge Steven Leifman, Associate Administrative Judge, Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida (Miami-Dade)

*It is estimated that more than two million arrests in the United States each year involve people with Serious Mental Illnesses (SMI) – half of which are homeless at the time of their arrest. As a result, untrained and unprepared stakeholders in the criminal justice system have been forced to navigate an increasingly scarce system of care for people with mental illnesses. Jails have become places where a disproportionate number of people with SMI spend significant amounts of time; their ties to the community severed, their treatment needs unmet, and their illnesses made worse. Judge Leifman will discuss his journey into the mental health system, the legal and medical history that led to America's mental health crisis and the essential elements necessary to create an effective system of care that ultimately will transform the mental health and criminal justice systems and make jail the last option for people with serious mental illnesses, not the first.*





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Judge Steve Leifman is the Associate Administrative Judge of the Miami-Dade County Court – Criminal Division. From 2007 – 2010, Judge Leifman served as Special Advisor on Criminal Justice and Mental Health for the Supreme Court of Florida. From 2010 to 2018, Judge Leifman chaired the Florida Supreme Court’s Task Force on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues in the Court. He currently chairs the Steering Committee on Problem Solving Courts for the Supreme Court of Florida and the Mental Health Committee for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida. In 2000, Judge Leifman established the Eleventh

Judicial Circuit Criminal Mental Health Project, which aims to divert people with serious mental illnesses from the criminal justice system into treatment.

Judge Leifman is the co-chair of the American Bar Association Criminal Justice Mental Health Committee and co-chair of the Judges and Psychiatrists Leadership Initiative. He is also a Gubernatorial appointment to the Florida Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse and a member of The National Institute on Drug Addiction’s (NIDA) Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network. Judge Leifman is a lifetime member of the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry (GAP), a Lecturer in Psychiatry at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and a Voluntary Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Miami School of Medicine and on the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Supportive Housing. More recently, Judge Leifman was appointed to serve on the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators National Judicial Task Force to Examine State Courts’ Response to Mental Illness and the Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee (ISMICC) established by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures Act.

In 2015, Judge Leifman received the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. One of the nation’s highest judicial honors presented by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., the Rehnquist Award is presented annually to a state court judge who exemplifies judicial excellence, integrity, fairness, and professional ethics.

Judge Leifman is also the first recipient to receive the Florida Supreme Court Chief Justice Award for Judicial Excellence (2015). He was named by New Times as one of Miami-Dade’s most interesting people of 2017 and a 2016 Governing Magazine Public Official of the Year. More recently, Judge Leifman was awarded the 2020 Dade County Bar Association (DCBA) David W. Dyer Professionalism Award, the most prestigious honor bestowed by the DCBA, the 2018 Pardes Humanitarian Prize in Mental Health, the 2019 Yale-NAMI Mental Health Advocacy Award, a 2019 Presidential Commendation by the American Psychiatric Association and the 2019 American College of Neuropsychopharmacology Public Service Award.





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Judge Leifman has been featured in many national and local television programs, radio programs, and articles regarding mental health and the criminal justice system. He has appeared as a guest on many Podcasts and has authored and published numerous articles and book chapters on mental illnesses and the criminal justice system. Judge Leifman is the subject of the Documentary, **The Definition of Insanity** which aired nationally on PBS on April 14, 2020.

*The Definition of Insanity shows how one local judge's novel approach to solving the mental health crisis could be the model to tackle the much larger epidemic throughout America.*

<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-definition-of-insanity-7egjih/>

**Moderator** Hon. Sharon Sullivan, Presiding Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County

## Speaker Panel

**Treatment** – Dr. Rashad Saafir, President and CEO, Bobby E. Wright Center Comprehensive Behavioral Health Center and Co-Founder and Director of the Westside Community Triage and Wellness Center

**Medicaid** – Kim McCullough, Deputy Director of Community Outreach, Department of Healthcare and Family Services

**Court** – Hon. Janet Holmgren, Juvenile and Problem-Solving Courts Division, 17<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court

**Probation** – Hannah Ewing, MSW, Tazewell County Specialty Court Officer

**Prison** – Dr. Melvin Hinton, Chief of Mental Health Services, Illinois Department of Corrections

**Legislature** – Deb Conroy, Illinois State Representative, 46<sup>th</sup> District

## Questions

