

Mental Health Summit - Session 5 Welcome, Overview and Instructions

Good Afternoon Everyone – I am Marcia Meis, Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts. It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 5th and final session of the Illinois Mental Health Task Force Virtual Summit.

Those of you joining us today have attended at least one - and perhaps all four - of our previous, outstanding summit sessions; and so you have heard the remarkable presenters, moderators and panelists - each offering us inspiration through their expertise and experiences. In turn, their words have provided to all of US great content to build a framework – statewide but also community by community – for improving the lives of those affected by mental illness and, in particular, those who encounter our justice system. In that vein, let me just remind you of some of the summit highlights to get you thinking about how we will use this experience to proceed with action planning for the future.

Our first session was titled “The 21st Century Crisis System: Strategies for Mental Health and Law Enforcement Collaboration to Prevent Justice Involvement.” We heard Dr. Margie Balfour speak about the ideal crisis system – one that includes specific wraparound services, collaborations and the use of data to drive decisions.

Dr. Balfour walked us through her own experience in the development and continuing efforts of the crisis system in Southern Arizona. Illinois Mental Health Task Force member Dr. Lorrie Jones then moderated a panel that included representatives of law enforcement, academics and clinicians who discussed the importance of Crisis Intervention Team Training, Community Policing and Crisis Centers. I was moved to hear retired Commander Marc Buslik talk about the fact that, while police are not social workers, they do have an important role to play in the social system and should indeed view themselves as “guardians of the community.”

Our second session was titled “Mental Health Diversions from the Justice System through Leadership, Collaboration, Building Momentum, and Moving Forward with Lessons Learned from the Pandemic.” This session featured Judge Steven Leifman, who passionately shared his work with mentally ill, justice-involved individuals in Miami-Dade County and the expansion of his work throughout the state of Florida and the nation. Judge Leifman described how the collaborative, innovative and humble approach taken in Miami-Dade County produced concrete, data-driven outcomes including lowered recidivism rates, lowered arrest rates, reduced police shootings, major cost avoidance and an overall change in the culture and stigma oftentimes associated with this population.

The panelists during this session included various stakeholders from a range of disciplines - clinical services, judicial operations, corrections, and legislation. All touched on innovations, identifying both positive and negative aspects of each, that have been employed to effectively provide services during the pandemic. Judge Janet Holmgren from Winnebago County and Probation Officer Hannah Ewing from Tazewell County each advocated a need to examine these changes, weigh the outcomes, and be open to continuing innovative, but effective, practices following the pandemic.

We welcomed Dr. Debra Pinals as our speaker for the third session: “Learning from the Voices of Lived Experience: Informing Change”. Dr. Pinals expertly laid out the systems, struggles and strategies to improving systems for those we serve. Dr. Pinals relayed the importance of collaboration, noting that most of our systems are often siloed. We speak different languages and the approaches of the behavioral health system and the criminal justice system are often vastly different. And so collaboration is a key strategy in improving service to those affected by mental illness.

Our panelists for this session included two individuals who generously shared their lived experiences with mental health challenges and maneuvering through the criminal justice system and healthcare system during and following a crisis. These

brave individuals gave voice to their lived experiences and provided feedback that is sometimes unavailable to those in the various behavioral health systems.

The fourth session, “How Mental Illness and Trauma Affect Quality of Life” included two outstanding speakers: former U.S. House Representative Patrick Kennedy and Dr. Sarah Vinson. Representative Kennedy expressed the importance of speaking with one voice, which includes not only the criminal justice system and the behavioral health systems, but the education system and other social systems. As he explained, all of these systems are interrelated and affect one another in either the proximal or more distant future. Dr. Vinson addressed structural trauma, interpersonal trauma based on environment, social justice, and mental health. She highlighted three areas of importance in improving the systemic approach to mental illness:

- 1) developing a knowledge base through ownership, self-study and humility,
- 2) understand injustice and our role in addressing it through listening and collaboration, and
- 3) responding to injustice through intentional design.

While each presenter, moderator and panelist offered different viewpoints and areas of expertise, some common themes emerged through the presentations and the

engaging question and answer sessions. These themes included collaboration, inclusivity and equity, systemic approaches, and data-driven decision making, all of which are needed in our mission to holistically treat all impacted by mental illness.

These themes are represented in the Illinois Mental Health Task Force goals to improve the court and community response to persons with mental health and co-occurring disorders. And they are:

1. To form strong partnerships that drive cross-system collaboration to develop data-informed strategies and solutions at the intersections of mental health, substance abuse, the courts, and our communities.
2. To regularly and widely share information among partners which promotes the creation of innovative and evidence-based solutions and strategies to address the mental health and substance abuse struggles we are facing in our communities and our state.
3. To assess, identify, and efficiently utilize available resources, including funding, for the strategies and solutions necessary for meaningful change in our response to persons with mental illness and co-occurring disorders.

While this is the final session of the Summit, it is really the beginning of our work. We will take the information you provide through the survey, as well as our work during the breakout sessions today, to create our plan going forward. We have already begun planning an additional program in early December, with information for registration going out in November.

But for today - with the aforementioned goals in mind - we now ask you to help us to develop a high-level action plan. Here is how we are going to do this.

In a few minutes, you will be moved into a randomly selected breakout group of fellow attendees. You will recall that the Strategies for Improvement Report Form was emailed to you yesterday with a request that you download the form for use during the breakout sessions today. If you have not yet had a chance to download the form, you can access and download the form in the chat box now or when you are automatically sent to your breakout room.

Once in your group, please take note of your group number and your group will need to nominate a facilitator and notetaker. The facilitator will lead the discussion and the notetaker will complete the report form. Your notetaker will also need to email

the completed form to Michelle O'Brien (email on the instruction slide) following the summit today.

Your group will have 50 minutes to discuss and complete the report form. We will give you a couple of warnings when we are approaching 50 minutes, and then you will be automatically returned to the main meeting room where we will ask each group's facilitator to present a short 2-minute summary of one of the challenges that your group identified.

We hope that all of you will participate in these breakout groups, as your voices are important and necessary to move forward in the effort for community-based collaboration and planning. We look forward to hearing your reports following the breakout sessions and please be sure to remain after the reports for Chief Justice Burke's very important Call to Action.