

# Interview with Nancy Cozine

## Oregon State Court Administrator

### NATIONAL JUDICIAL TASK FORCE TO EXAMINE STATE COURTS' RESPONSE TO MENTAL ILLNESS

#### **Nancy Cozine discusses the Task Force's work and goals.**

*In the fourth of eight interviews of the National Judicial Task Force Executive Committee members, Oregon State Court Administrator Nancy Cozine, Co-chair of the Criminal Justice Work Group, discusses how the Task Force's work will lead to real change, what she hopes the Work Group will accomplish, and what challenges Oregon is facing.*

#### **Q: How can we ensure that the task force's work leads to real change?**

**A:** Leaders in all three branches of government, and at all levels – national, state, and local – need to be talking to ensure that resources, funding structures, and programs are all coordinated and working together to achieve desired outcomes. And with that said, we also need to be tracking the data and the outcomes.

#### **Q: What do you hope the Criminal Justice Work Group accomplishes?**

**A:** I hope the criminal justice work group accomplishes at least two things. First, that it provides tools and resources so that it is as easy as possible for jurisdictions across the country to understand what they can do reduce the number of people in the criminal justice system who are suffering from mental illness. The Work Group's focus on the intercept model has the potential to generate broad participation in planning efforts that will divert people into supportive programs that will improve the lives of people suffering from mental illness and also reduce further victimization of people in our communities. Second, I hope the Work Group provides guidance to ensure that those who remain engaged in the criminal justice system are treated with respect, and that our court processes are efficient so that the accused, victims, and their family members can get resolutions that are timely and trauma-informed.

#### **Q: What's the situation in your state as it relates to the needs of individuals with serious mental illness who find themselves in the courts?**

**A:** The solution in Oregon is to keep working with partners at the national, state, and local levels so that we have a shared sense of direction and we can work together to reduce barriers, refine statutory processes, and build appropriate, durable resources.