

Vermont Judiciary Commission on Mental Health and the Courts

First Annual Summit – Thursday, September 14, 2023

SPEAKERS & PANELISTS

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Vermont Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Reiber



Paul L. Reiber of Chittenden, Vermont was appointed to the Vermont Supreme Court by Gov. James Douglas, sworn in as an Associate Justice October 2003 and as Chief Justice December 2004. He was in private practice in Rutland, Vermont at Reiber, Kenlan, Schwiebert, Hall & Facey, P.C. at the time of his initial Supreme Court appointment. With Justice Karen Carroll he co-chairs the Vermont Judiciary Commission on Mental Health and the Courts. Previously he served as Chair of the Vermont Commission on Judicial Operation, which resulted in historic legislation that unified the Vermont state court system. As a member of the Conference of Chief Justices he served on the National Judicial Opioid Initiative, Co-Chaired the National Judicial Task Force to Examine State Courts' Response to Mental Illness and currently Co-Chairs the sequel to that effort, the Behavioral Health Committee. A Past President of the Conference of Chief Justices he also chaired the National Center for State Courts Board of Directors. He is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and American Law Institute and is active in his local chapter of the American Inns of Court. B.A., Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia, 1970. J.D., Suffolk Law School, Boston, 1974. H. J.D., Vermont Law School, 2013. He and his wife Sandi have two daughters, three granddaughters, and two grandsons.

Vermont Chief Prevention Officer Monica Hutt



Monica has worked in human services for her entire professional career and in state government for the last 18 years. Throughout that time, she has worked with children and families in multiple positions, both in the community and in the Agency of Human Services. Most recently she served as the Commissioner for the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. Currently, she is working in the Governor's office as the Chief Prevention Officer for Vermont and as a senior policy advisor to Governor Phil Scott. Monica is a 2008 graduate of the Snelling Center for Government Vermont Leadership Institute and a 2011 graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School, Executives in Local and State Government program. She was honored to receive the Snelling Center for Government, Vermont Leadership Institute Excellence in Leadership Award in 2019. Monica lives in Williston, Vermont with her husband and two dogs and has three adult children that cycle through home on a regular basis.



Vermont Senator Virginia Lyons

Virginia “GINNY” Lyons, Senator, of Williston, is in her 12th term representing Chittenden County. Senator Lyons chairs the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, is a member of the Joint Justice Oversight Committee, Legislative Committee on Rules, Health Care Reform Oversight Committee, Vermont Judiciary Commission on Mental Health and the Courts. Her legislation reflects a commitment to people, focusing on policies to reduce trauma negatively affecting children and families. Her legislation includes prevention, mental health and substance use disorder services, and linkage of medical care with community services. She works toward health care reform for universal access, improved quality, and affordable costs. Sen. Lyons participates with various community boards and organizations. She was educated at Drew University, Rutgers University, and earned her doctorate at UVM. She is a college professor with over 35 years of teaching, research, and administrative experience in the biological sciences. Senator Lyons chaired the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy between 2003–2013, guiding VT’s early response to climate change, renewable energy development, stormwater protection, land use planning, and reduction of toxic substances in the environment



Keynote Speaker Hon. Steven Leifman

Judge Steve Leifman is an Associate Administrative Judge of the Miami-Dade County Court. He previously served as Special Advisor on Criminal Justice and Mental Health for the Supreme Court of Florida and currently chairs the Florida Supreme Courts’ Steering Committee on Problem Solving Courts.

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 serves on the Florida Drug Policy Advisory Council and The National Institute on Drug Addiction’s (NIDA) Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network. Judge Leifman is a 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. 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 21st 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 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 2018 Pardes Humanitarian Prize in Mental Health, the 2019 Yale-NAMI Mental Health Advocacy Award and a 2019 Presidential Commendation by the American Psychiatric Association.

Judge Leifman has been featured in many national and local television programs, radio programs, and articles regarding mental health 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. His most recent co-authored article on mental health and criminal justice was published in The Atlantic on May 30, 2022.

Topic One – Overview of Crisis Intervention Projects in Vermont



Vermont Supreme Court Justice Karen Carroll

Justice Carroll is a former prosecutor, having worked for both the Windham County State's Attorney and Vermont Attorney General. She was also designated as a Special Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Vermont in order to prosecute serious drug crimes in federal court. In 2000, she was appointed a Superior Court Judge by Governor Howard Dean and presided in the civil, criminal, and family dockets in Windham, Bennington, and Windsor counties. In 2017, Governor Phil Scott appointed her to the Vermont Supreme Court.



DMH Care Management Director Allie Nerenberg

Allie Nerenberg is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor who works for the Department of Mental Health as the Care Management Director. She has been with the Department for over nine years, and she has been in this position for the past two years. Allie has a Master of Science in Counseling from the University of Vermont and a Bachelor of Arts from Bowdoin College. In her spare time, she can be found running, baking, and playing outside with her three young sons.

DMH Chief, Adolescent & Family Unit Dana Robson

Dana Robson, LICSW, is the Children's Mental Health Operations Chief in the Child, Adolescent and Family Unit (CAFU) at DMH. She has worked in the Children's Mental Health System of Care in Vermont for the past 33 years. She started in a residential treatment program, and then worked in early childhood services, as a DCF social worker, a school-based clinician, and an individual therapist before moving to DMH 17 years ago. As part of her role at DMH, she supervises the Children's Care Managers who authorize residential treatment and provide care management services for youth with significant mental health needs, support discharge planning for children in the Brattleboro Retreat and

Crisis and Hospital Diversion Programs, and provide support and problem solving for children waiting in the Emergency Departments.

HCRS Chief Clinical Services Officer Kate Lamphere



Kate Lamphere joined HCRS in 2008 and provides leadership to and oversight of all Adult Mental Health and Substance Use Services including outpatient services, community rehabilitation, crisis services, peer support services, residential services, and employment services. In 2022, Kate became the Chief Clinical Services Officer at HCRS, overseeing all clinical services. Kate has a BA in Social Work from Plymouth State University and an MSW from the University of New Hampshire. Kate is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in the state of Vermont.

Topic Two – Survey Responses; SIM Exercise Collaboration by Region



Superior Court Judge Thomas Carlson

Tom Carlson has been a Superior Court Judge since September 2015, with assignments in general jurisdiction courts in Grand Isle, Lamoille and Addison counties, Civil Division in Franklin County and in Family Divisions in Chittenden and Franklin counties. The mental health docket has been a consistent interest, as have mental health issues in all dockets, with special focus on competency and related challenges. He has been a member of the Supreme Court Commission on Mental Health in the Courts since its inception in 2021.

Tom's interest tracks back to joining the board of directors of the Addison County Counseling Service as a student representative in 1976; writing a senior thesis on the new Vermont commitment law in 1977-78; and his first job out of college in 1978 working as a paralegal for Vermont Legal Aid in the Vermont State Hospital in Waterbury. In 30 years of private law practice, his longest client relationship was with the largest private mental health services companies in Vermont, Matrix Health Systems and Otter Creek Associates. That was more of the business end of things but included seminars with clinicians on responding to subpoenas and writing the constitution for Centerpoint, a 25 year invaluable services joint venture that has just recently come to an unfortunate end.

As a judge, Tom is now particularly interested in how to better coordinate mental health services with the growing connections between the courts, law enforcement and community restorative justice agencies.



Washington County Mental Health Programs Kate Kurrle

Karen Kurrle, Licensed Psychologist-Master is the Intensive Care Services Director at Washington County Mental Health Services. Karen has worked in emergency mental health services for 25 years. In her current role as the ICS Director, she provides clinical and administrative supervision for WCMHS emergent and urgent care programs. Karen attended Cornell University for her undergraduate studies and Saint Michaels College for her graduate program. She lives in Montpelier with her husband and 2 children.



National Center for State Courts Consultant Michelle O'Brien

Michelle R. O'Brien, JD, is a Principal Court Management Consultant with the National Center for State Courts. Prior to working with NCSC, Ms. O'Brien was the Executive Director of the Illinois Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health and Justice where she provided statewide and local training and technical assistance for jurisdictions working with justice-involved persons with behavioral health disorders to improve program designs, policies, and case processing. She was also the Specialty Courts Administrator and a Winnebago County Assistant State's Attorney for Winnebago County, Illinois. Ms. O'Brien helped develop the mental health court for Winnebago County and served as the prosecutor from its inception in 2005. With 28 years of experience in the criminal justice system, Ms. O'Brien has specialized in the effective administration of courts using evidence-based principles to guide initiatives from implementation to long-term impact sustainability. Ms. O'Brien is a past board member of the Illinois Association of Problem-Solving Courts, the past president and past board member of the Mental Health Court Association of Illinois, and past board member of the Illinois Association of Drug Court Professionals. She is the past president of the Winnebago County Bar Association. Ms. O'Brien is a contributor of a chapter in *The Sequential Intercept Model and Criminal Justice*, contributor and editor to the Illinois Department of Human Services Forensic Handbook, and a peer reviewer for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals' *Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards, Volume II*. She is a facilitator of the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM), Upstream Strengthening Children and Families, and Juvenile Justice Mapping. She has facilitated numerous cross-system information sharing and collaborations between justice and behavioral health partners. She is a trainer for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's *How Being Trauma-Informed Improves Criminal Justice System Responses* and is a trainer for the Council of State Governments' *Mental Health Court Curriculum*. Ms. O'Brien received her JD from Drake University Law School and received a BA in Criminal Justice from Simpson College.

Topic Three – Commission Recommendations

Competency Evaluations Committee, Hon. Karen Carroll

(See above)

Pre-Charge Diversion Committee, Hon. Thomas Carlson

(See above)

Post-Charge Pre-Trial Services Committee, Hon. Kate Hayes



Katherine (Kate) A. Hayes is a retired superior judge. She is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College and the University of Michigan Law School. After nearly twenty years as an attorney in Vermont, in a variety of roles, she was appointed to the bench by Governor Howard Dean. She served as a superior judge from January 2003 through August 2023. She presided most frequently in the Family Division of the Windham Unit, which has among the most active mental health treatment dockets in Vermont. Judge Hayes continues to assist with that docket as a retired judge, as needed. During her tenure as a full-time judge she also often presided in the Criminal Division, and has significant experience in managing serious criminal cases involving defendants with complex mental health related issues.

Mental Illness Training Committee, Hon. Thomas Zonay



Judge Thomas A. Zonay is the Chief Superior Judge for the State of Vermont. He was appointed to the bench by Governor James Douglas in 2007 and appointed as Chief Superior Judge in 2021. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was an attorney in private practice and before that he was a police officer in Woodstock, VT. Judge Zonay received a bachelor's degree in food industry from Delaware Valley College and a Juris Doctor from Vermont Law School. He is the Chair of the Vermont Sentencing Commission and the Coordinated Justice Reform Council. He is the past-chair of the Vermont Public Access to Court Records Committee, the Vermont Judicial Education Committee, the Vermont Criminal Rules Committee, has served as a member of the Vermont Judicial Conduct Board, and the Vermont Judiciary Advisory Council (chair of budget committee). He has served on the Vermont Bar Association Board of Managers (President, 2005); was a director of the Vermont Bar Foundation; and is a past president of the New England Bar Association. At the time of his appointment to the bench, Judge Zonay was chairman of the Vermont Human Rights Commission and had previously served on other judicial and community boards and committees. He is also a U.S.C.G. licensed Master Captain. Judge Zonay is an alumnus of The National Judicial College, joined its faculty in 2012, and is the Immediate past chair of its Faculty Council.

Topic Four – Panel Overview of Peer Support Strategies

Superior Court Judge Kate Hayes

(See above)

Executive Director Recovery Vermont Will Eberle



Will Eberle, Founder of Mission Driver, is a person in recovery who experienced homelessness, ACEs, and crushing poverty as a child in the Mountain West. Will has overcome trauma, mental health challenges, addiction, homelessness, and abuse. He uses trail running, yoga, piano, knitting, fishing, and “paying it forward” to maintain his Recovery and wellness, and models neuroplasticity and resilience in his life and work.

Will is a Curtis Scholar with a Masters of Public Administration degree from Norwich University and a Bachelors of Psychology degree from Johnson State College in Vermont. He has completed the Vermont Agency of Human Services Leadership Academy and is a member of the Snelling School of Government’s Vermont Leadership Institute - class of 2023. Will has been trained in Intentional Peer Support, Wellness Recovery Action Planning, Individualized Placement and Support Supported Employment, Forensic Peer Support, and Nonviolent Communication.

Will trains, consults, speaks, and informs policy on human services, homelessness, and mental health and addiction recovery. Will is the Executive Director of Recovery Vermont/The Vermont Association of Mental Health and Addiction Recovery - Vermont's largest non-profit state-wide mental health and addiction recovery organization. Previously Will was a Field Director at the Vermont Agency of Human Services for six years and an Executive Director and peer support counselor at Another Way, a Montpelier, Vermont-based mental health drop-in center for five years. He started his human services career as a street outreach worker and at-risk youth trainer and mentor.

Pathways VT Training Coordinator Alexander Ferguson



Alexander Ferguson (he/him/his) is originally from Phoenix, Arizona. Alexander is of mixed race, identifying and reconnecting with Afro/Indigenous heritage from Honduras and Central America. He was raised in New Jersey, New York, and Vermont. He is an Alumni of The Institute of Audio Research and Technology (IAR). He originally

had a background in sound and audio engineering. After graduating from (IAR), Alexander spent time traveling and learning about himself, exploring different cultures and communities. He has experienced challenges finding stable housing, healthcare and mental health support. He moved back to Vermont in 2013, and began working with Pathways Vermont. He has worked in peer support and community based services for ten years. Previous positions at Pathways include

serving as the Team Lead at the Pathways Community Center & Team Lead of Pathways Support Line.

Alexander is currently Pathways Vermont's Training Coordinator working within Vermont's Peer Workforce Development Initiative and Pathways Vermont's Training Institute. He also facilitates a Hearing Voices Support Group and a BIPOC affinity space. Alexander firmly believes housing and healthcare are basic human rights that should be equally guaranteed to all without bias or judgment.



Illinois Statewide Behavioral Health Administrator Scott Block

Scott A. Block, Illinois' Statewide Behavioral Health Administrator. As the AOIC's Statewide Behavioral Health Administrator, Scott serves as the Illinois Judicial Branch's dedicated voice and resource, committed to furthering local, state, and national behavioral health and justice initiatives. In this capacity, he is the project director for the Illinois Mental Health Task Force, provides strategic and technical consultation for Illinois Courts, and acts as liaison behavioral health and justice affiliates and organizations.

Throughout his 20+ year career in the behavioral health field, Scott has held leadership roles in the public and private sectors, and he has been recognized as subject matter expert and innovator with multiple honors and awards. He has served on numerous governmental and not-for-profit boards, committees, and work groups, helping to shape policies and inform best practices. He is also educating the future workforce as an Adjunct Professor at Aurora University, teaching Graduate Addictions courses.

Scott earned a Master's Degree in Counseling, is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, Certified Alcohol and Other Drug Counselor, Certified Criminal Justice Addictions Professional, and a National Center for State Court's Certified Court Manager.