



Improving the Judiciary's Response to Mental Health Needs

Presented by

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Chief Justice's Interbranch Advisory/Implementation Committee on Mental Health Initiatives

Chief Justice Stuart Rabner convened the Interbranch Advisory Committee on Mental Health Initiatives in October of 2010. The Committee was charged with:

- ▶ Reviewing existing services and programs and developing advice on how to coordinate better among different service providers and defendants and:
- ▶ How to improve the Judiciary's response to mental health needs

Interbranch Mental Health Initiatives Implementation Committee

- The New Jersey Supreme Court established an Interbranch Mental Health Initiatives Implementation Committee.
- Implementation Committee members were appointed by the AOC by December, 2014 with representation from:
 - AOC, Municipal & Superior Court Judges, Adult Probation, Public Defender, Private Bar, OAG, Prosecutors, Law Enforcement, DMHAS, Mental Health Providers, NAMI, Consumer, Mental Health Administrator
- Committee co-chaired by a Judge and DMHAS representative

Interbranch Recommendations

- The report contained 17 distinct recommendations all accepted by the Supreme Court;
- Recommendations fell into roughly 3 themes: Education, Collaboration & Initiation of programs.
- A recommendation to explore funding opportunities cuts across all three themes

Interbranch Recommendations cont'

- Education of the judiciary re: mental health system
- Education of mental health professionals & other stakeholders re: judicial system
- Education of law enforcement & other stakeholders about mental illness, the mental health system and collaborative opportunities & avenues for increased communication such as CIT
- Public awareness

Collaboration

- ▶ County core teams/county problem-solving committees
- ▶ Cross-systems mapping
 - ▶ Fourteen counties have participated
- ▶ Other forms of collaboration including cross government branch information gathering

Initiation & Development of Possible Pilot programs

- **Municipal Court Liaison programs**
 - Identification of defendants with mental illness;
 - Consultation with court;
 - Linkage to services
- **Prosecutors' Diversion programs**
 - Diversion from state prison through adherence to agreed upon treatment.
 - Success completion = no state prison
- **Maintenance & possible expansion of the Probation Mental Health program**