



NEWS RELEASE
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**Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to Hold
Briefing on the Criminalization of People with Mental Illnesses**

WHAT: Public Briefing of the Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

WHEN: Wednesday, June 14, 2017

WHERE: Lewiston City Hall, 27 Pine Street Lewiston, Maine 04240

Washington, DC - The Maine Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) will hold a public briefing to examine the issue of the criminalization in Maine of people with mental illnesses.

The mental health budgets in this country have been drastically cut; in Maine, residents who in the past might have received support and medical stabilization from the mental health system now are without such services. As a result, some individuals with mental health challenges increasingly come into contact with the criminal justice system. However, Maine's state prisons and local jails are without sufficient forensic units to house and treat persons with mental health challenges. Jail administrators as well as corrections officials are some of the first to admit that they lack the facilities and trained staff to handle individuals with mental health challenges. This occurs across the state even though Maine courts have held that the failure of law enforcement officials to make a reasonable accommodation in the provision of services for the mentally ill is a violation of section 2 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Committee will hear from elected officials, government officials, advocates, and others to help the Committee better understand the issue. The Committee will examine the rate of encounters that individuals with mental health challenges have with the state criminal justice system; the training of state and local law enforcement officers, including corrections officers to handle encounters with the mentally ill; the access to mental health professionals and legal assistance for persons in the criminal justice system who are mentally ill; whether accommodations/treatment are currently available and being utilized in both urban and rural correctional settings throughout the state; the effectiveness of these settings in protecting the physical and mental welfare of the affected prisoners; and the status and recommendations regarding the development, placement and use of forensic units and/or other options.

The public is invited to the meeting and encouraged to address the Committee following the presentations.

AGENDA

I. Welcome and Introductions 9:20 am

II. Briefing 9:20 am - 3:30 pm

Panel One: Advocates for People with Mental Illnesses **9:30 to 10:40 am**

Tonya DiMillo, BSW, Chair, Board of Visitors, Long Creek Youth Development Center
Jenna Mehnert, Executive Director, NAMI-Maine
Bob Reed, Father of Anthony Reed

Panel Two: Law Enforcement at the Front Lines **10:40 to 11:50 am**

Darrell Crandall, Sheriff, Aroostook County
Jason Madore, Commander, Maine State Police, Crisis Negotiation Team
Michael Sauschuck, Police Chief, Portland
Tyler Stevenson, Commander, Maine State Police, Tactical (SWAT) Team

Break 11:50 am to 12:00 pm

Panel Three: Critical Decision Point--Diversion for Treatment or Jail? **12:00 to 1:15 pm**

Maeghan Maloney, District Attorney, Kennebec and Somerset Counties
Troy Morton, Sheriff, Penobscot County
Kevin Voyvodich, Managing Attorney, Disability Rights Maine
Tim Zerillo, Defense Attorney, Hallett, Zerillo & Whipple, P.A.

Lunch Break 1:15 to 2:00 pm

Panel Four: Legislature: Legislative Developments and New Forensic Unit **2:00 to 3:00 pm**

Mark Dion, Maine State Senator, District 28 (Westbrook/Portland)
Drew Gattine, Maine State Representative, District 126 (Westbrook)
Charlotte Warren, Maine State Representative, District 84 (Hallowell, Manchester, West Gardiner)
Daniel Wathen, Court Master, Riverview Consent Agreement

III. Public Session

IV. Adjournment

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