



NEWS RELEASE
October 21, 2019

Contact: Ivy Davis
idavis@usccr.gov
202-376-7533

**District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Public Briefing:**

Mental Health, Mental Health Courts and the Criminal Justice System

Washington, DC – On Thursday, November 7, 2019, the District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights will hold a public briefing to examine mental health, and the criminal justice system, including the role of the DC Mental Health Community Court (MHCC).

Committee Chairman John G. Malcolm explained the reason for the Committee’s review,

“In recent years, a large number of individuals suffering from mental illness end up involved in the criminal justice system. Many of them are homeless and not receiving mental health services in their communities. People suffering from a mental illness who commit crimes often end up cycling in and out of criminal justice system, housed in jails and prisons that are ill-equipped to provide adequate treatment. Mental health courts are designed to break this pernicious cycle by enabling offenders who suffer from mental illness to get the treatment they need, rather than incarcerating them, with the hope that this will reduce recidivism rates thereby enhancing public safety. This public hearing will examine how well the mental health court system is currently operating in the District of Columbia. The D.C. Advisory Committee will hear testimony from mental health court experts and stakeholders in the current system.”

**WHAT: District of Columbia Advisory Committee Public Briefing:
*Mental Health, Mental Courts and the Criminal Justice
System in DC***

WHEN: Thursday, November 7, 2019 | 9:00 am – 5:00 pm ET

**WHERE: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1331 Pennsylvania Av. NW
Suite 1150, Washington, DC 20425 (entrance on F St. NW)**

Invited expert witnesses are indicated on the attached briefing agenda. They will share their knowledge about this topic and respond to questions from the Committee members.

This briefing is open to the public. Individuals requiring accommodations must contact Evelyn Bohor – 10 business days before the briefing date – by phone 202-276-7533 or email ero@usccr.gov.

Open Public Comments Session

At 4:00 pm, there will be an open comment session. Members of the public will be invited to make brief statements sharing their experiences and knowledge on this topic; the statements shall not exceed five minutes. Those wishing to speak are asked to arrive early and will be asked to sign-up when they arrive at the briefing site.

Briefing Record

The briefing record will remain open for 30 days after the hearing date. Written statements and documents – articles, reports, studies that will inform the Committee on this topic – received in the Eastern Regional Office (ERO) of the Commission by 5:00 pm, on Monday, December 9, 2019, will be included in the briefing record. Written statements and documents may be submitted as follows:

Mail: Eastern Regional Office
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
1331 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1150
Washington, DC 20415

Email: ero@usccr.gov

Briefing Outcome

Subsequent to the briefing, the Committee will submit a written report to the Commission summarizing the results of its examination, including findings and recommendations. There will also be a written transcript of the briefing at a later date. The written report will be published on the Commission website. Stay abreast of updates at www.usccr.gov.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights. It is the only federal department, agency or commission with a network of 51 statutorily-mandated federal advisory committees in each state and the District of Columbia – that study civil rights issues in their states and report the results of their reviews to the Commission. For more information about the Commission, and the DC Advisory Committee, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

**District of Columbia Advisory Committee to the U.S.
Commission on Civil Rights Public Briefing**

***Mental Health, Mental Health Courts
and the Criminal Justice System***

November 7, 2019

**U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1331 Pennsylvania Av. NW
Suite 1150, Washington, DC 20425 (entrance on F St. NW)**

AGENDA

9:00 am – 9:15 am Welcome and Introductions

9:15 am – 10:45 am Panel 1. Mental Health Court Experts

Richard Boldt
T. Carroll Brown Professor of Law
University of Maryland Carey School of Law
Baltimore, MD

Kelli Canada
Associate Professor and Associate Director
of Research School of Social Work
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO

E. Lea Johnston, Professor of Law
University of Florida Levin College of Law
Gainesville, FL

Susan McMahon, Professor of Law
Georgetown Law School
Washington, DC

Allison Redlich, Professor of Criminology, Law
& Society
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA

Terrence D. Walton, Chief Operating Officer
National Association of Drug Court Professionals
Alexandria, VA

10:45 am – 12:15 pm Panel 2. DC Mental Health Court Stakeholders

Kelly O'Meara, Executive Director
Strategic Change Division
Metropolitan Police Department
Washington, DC

Stephen Rickard, Chief, General Crimes Section
D.C. U.S. Attorney's Office
Washington, DC

Laura L. Rose, Esq.
Mental Health Specialist for the Trial Division
Public Defender Service for DC
Washington, DC

Gregg Baron, Esq.
Defense Counsel
Washington, DC

12:15 pm – 1:00 pm

Lunch Break

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Panel 3: DC Mental Health Court Stakeholders

Hon. Ann O'Regan Keary, Senior Judge
DC Superior Court
Washington, DC

Cleonia Terry, Coordinator, Mental Health Community Court
DC Superior Court
Washington, DC

Victor V. Davis, Chief of Staff
Pretrial Services for the District of Columbia
Washington, DC

Panelist still to be identified

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Panel 4: DC Mental Health Court Stakeholders

Tammy Seltzer, Director
DC Jail and Prison Advocacy Project
University Legal Services
Washington, DC

David Freeman, Chief Clinical Officer
Community Connections, Inc.
Washington, DC

Christy Respress, Executive Director
Pathways to Housing DC
Washington, DC

Panelist still to be identified

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Public Open Comments Session