

CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

Mental Health Committee

Monday, July 14, 2025 at 1:00-2:30pm

MINUTES

Members Present: Gerald Harmon (Committee Co-chair), Gary Roberge, John Santa, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, William O'Connor

Staff: Rich Sparaco (Interim Executive Director), Andrew Clark, Matthew Hono,

Also in Attendance: Rachel Mirsky, Jan Walker, Katie Farrell, Robyn Holt, Ben Howell, John Delbarba, Sen. Cathy Osten

- **Meeting Convened** – Judge Harmon convened the meeting at 1:06 PM
- **April 29, 2025 Meeting Minutes Approved**
- **Diversion over Detention: Building a Disability-Responsive Justice System;** Robyn Holt, The Arc of New Jersey's Criminal Justice Advocacy Program (CJAP) Director, presented on her organization's work to improve the experiences of those with disabilities in the criminal justice system. She outlined CJAP's work to coordinate alternatives to incarceration, offer support and advocacy during criminal proceedings, administer trainings, and provide resources to practitioners. Holt also highlighted common challenges persons with IDD experience in the criminal justice system, along with data on primary IDD diagnoses, common legal charges, and co-occurring disorders.
- **Presentation of recurring themes from the study on the experiences of people with Intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, in CT's criminal justice system;** Rachel Mirsky, Supervising Attorney at Disability Rights Connecticut, shared key observations and emerging trends relevant to the development of a Connecticut IDD/ASD diversionary program. Based on initial research, Mirsky identified several key points, including:
 - insufficient practitioner training from arrest through case resolution,
 - a need for more robust data collection across involved agencies,
 - the prevalence of certain charges within the IDD/ASD justice-involved population,
 - shortcomings in current diversionary and assessment practices for individuals with IDD/ASD, and
 - a lack of programming for incarcerated individuals with IDD/ASD.
- **Other Updates**
 - **Yale SEICHE Center Study Update - Evaluation of community mental health and addiction treatment use in individuals following release from incarceration or on community supervision, Connecticut, 2018-2022;** Dr.

Benjamin Howell reported that efforts to gain access to data through the Office of Policy and Management's P20 WIN system have made progress and that his team aims to complete the project by the end of the 2025 calendar year.

- **Supervised Diversionary Program Proposal Final Update;** Judge Harmon, Subcommittee Co-chair, shared an update on the status of the Supervised Diversionary Program (SDP) legislative proposal, which aimed to expand the program's eligibility to persons with intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder. The proposal was considered by the General Assembly as Section 9 of House Bill 7259 but was removed from the bill in the House of Representatives.

- **Meeting Adjourned 2:40 pm**