

# CONNECTICUT SENTENCING COMMISSION

## Mental Health Committee

Monday, September 15, 2025

3:00 – 4:30 PM

**Members Present:** Gerald Harmon (Committee Co-Chair), Jennifer Zito (Committee Co-Chair), William O'Connor, Leonard Fasano, Robin Pavia, Thomas Canny

**Staff:** Rich Sparaco (Interim Executive Director), Andrew Clark, Matthew Hono, Jordan Oquendo, Thomas Dowd

**Also in Attendance:** Rachel Mirsky, Katie Farrell, Lisa D'Angelo, John DelBarba, Jessica Waggoner, Jess Thomas, Kathy Flaherty

### I. MEETING CONVENED

- Judge Harmon convened the meeting at 3:03pm.

### II. JULY 14, 2025 MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES WERE APPROVED

- Jennifer Zito and Leonard Fasano abstained due to their absence at the last meeting.

### III. PROJECT UPDATES

- Competency to Stand Trial Study – Jessica Waggoner, Director, Forensic Services Division, DMHAS
  - Jessica Waggoner presented the status of the Commission's comprehensive report on Competency to Stand Trial procedures in Connecticut. She reported that DHMAS Forensic Services has reviewed the draft, suggested small edits to language, and updated data. Commission staff will review these edits and then circulate a draft of the report to the Mental Health Committee for review before October 6th. Commission members and staff discussed moving the October 28th Mental Health Committee meeting to October 14th so that the report can be approved at the October 23rd full Commission meeting. There was general agreement that the date should be moved.

- Study on the experiences of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, in Connecticut's criminal justice system – Rachel Mirsky, Supervising Attorney, Disability Rights Connecticut
  - Rachel Mirsky updated the Commission on the progress of the report required by Public Act 23-137, which focuses on how people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, interact with the criminal justice system. She highlighted the need to identify more individuals with undiagnosed or hidden disabilities and shared insights from comparing best practices across 20+ states, including themes around collaboration between agencies and common crime patterns among this population. Rachel also mentioned recent efforts by the Office of Policy and Management to raise grant funds and collect data on autism from across state entities. The team aims to produce a report by the end of the year. William O'Connor inquired if DOC has data on those who have autism in their system. Rachel responded yes but she suspected that this data might undercount the true prevalence. Katie Farrell also offered to connect Rachel to public defender social workers who may identify individuals with autism. Judge Robin Pavia raised concerns that a report by the end of the year may prevent the Commission from incorporating the findings into its forthcoming legislative agenda.
  - The group also discussed efforts to expand the state's Supervised Diversionary Program (SDP) to include individuals with IDD/ASD. Jennifer Zito flagged that funding and the lack of CSSD programming for these conditions remain key challenges. Jennifer Zito asked Rachel Mirsky what programming and treatment looks like in other states. Rachel stressed that treatment is often extremely individualized based on the unique needs of the client. John DelBarba raised the idea that SDP appears to be the best suited program to include diversionary provision for IDD/ASD.
- Evaluation of community mental health and addiction treatment use in individuals following release from incarceration or on community supervision, Connecticut, 2018-2022
  - Judge Harmon provided an update on behalf of the Yale SEICHE Center study on the experiences of justice involved individuals seeking mental health or addiction services in the community. Judge Harmon relayed that the qualitative component of the report is nearly complete with all the interviews transcribed and coding finishing up in the next few weeks. The team is continuing to await data from OPM's P20 Win data system.

IV. THE MEETING ADJOURNED WAS AT 3:41 PM

**UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE**

October 14, 2025, at 3:00 PM (Zoom) – Mental Health Committee meeting

October 23, 2025, at 1:00 PM (In-Person) – Sentencing Commission meeting