

KENTUCKY JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH



Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date, Time	June 13, 2025; 1:00-3:00 PM ET
Meeting Location	Administrative Office of the Courts 1001 Vandalay Drive Frankfort, KY 40601
Virtual Option	The meeting was also offered virtually through Zoom; a recording can be found here .

Attendees

Name	Organization
Crystal Adams (Zoom)	Director, Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Johnny Bevins	Lewis County Sheriff, Vice President of the Kentucky Sheriff's Association
Hon. Denise Brown	Family Court Judge
Hon. Stephanie Burke	District Judge
Cookie Crews (Zoom)	Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Corrections
Hon. Robert B. Conley	Justice, Kentucky Supreme Court
Hon. J. Foster Cotthoff (Zoom)	District Judge
Lesa Dennis (Zoom)	Acting Commissioner, Department of Community Based Services
Margaret Forsee	Owen County Circuit Court Clerk, President of Kentucky Circuit Court Clerk Association
Eric Friedlander	Secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Becky Frost (Zoom)	Western State Hospital
Hon. Tyler Green	District Judge
Chris Griffith	Christian Appalachian Project
Hon. Tanisha A. Hickerson (Zoom)	District Court Judge
Hon. Yvette Hourigan (Zoom)	Kentucky Lawyer Assistance Program, Kentucky Bar Association

Van Ingram	Executive Director of Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy
Hon. Lisa Jones	Judge, Kentucky Court of Appeals
Hon. Debra Hembree Lambert	Chief Justice, Kentucky Supreme Court
Josh Lindblom	Hardin County Jailer, President of Kentucky Jailer's Association
Rabbi Shlomo Litvin	Chabad of the Bluegrass
Amy Luttrell	CEO, Goodwill
Hon. Cole Adams Maier	Circuit Court Judge
Katie Marks	Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Kimberly Moser (Zoom)	Representative
Jayden Norris	Executive Director, NAMI Kentucky
Hon. Rebecca Phillips (Zoom)	Chief Circuit Judge
Hon. Damon Preston	Department of Public Advocacy
Hon. Zach Ramsey	Director, Administrative office of the Courts
Brenda Rosen	CSW, Executive Director of National Association of Social Workers Kentucky
Steve Shannon (Zoom)	Kentucky Association of Regional Programs
Dr. Steven Stack	Secretary, Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Dr. Koleen Slusher	LCSW, Director of Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center
Thomas B. Stephens (Zoom)	President and CEO of Kentucky Association of Health Plans
Hon. John Lindsay Tackett	District Judge
Tanya P. Terry	Montgomery County Circuit Court Clerk, President of Kentucky Association of Circuit Court Clerks
Diane Thompson	Nelson County Circuit Court Clerk
Hon. Larry Thompson	Kentucky Court of Appeals
Hon. Jordan Dallas Turner	Boone County Attorney, Kentucky County Attorneys Association
Hon. Marcus Vanover (Zoom)	Family Court
Dr. Mark Woods	Chief Nursing Officer, Eastern State Hospital- University of Kentucky
Hon. Brian Wright	Past President of Commonwealth Attorney's Association
Hon. Wes Duke (Zoom)	Delegate —Eric Friedlander
Dr. Silas Session (Zoom)	Delegate—Whitney P. Allen, Jr.
Wil Schroder	Delegate — Russell Coleman
Martha Mather	Delegate—Randy White

Courtney Maynard	Delegate – Tom Vicini
Betty Whittaker	Delegate—Cora McNabb

Agenda

- I. Registration and Lunch**
- II. Welcome and Commission Updates**
- III. DBHDID Strategic Initiatives**
- IV. Committee and Workgroup Updates**
- V. Closing Remarks**
- VI. Adjourn**

Welcome and Commission Updates

Honorable Robert B. Conley, Deputy Chief Justice, Kentucky Supreme Court, welcomed and thanked the commission members for being present. Justice Conley referenced commission materials, which included a copy of the agenda and meeting minutes from the March Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health (KJCMH) Quarterly meeting.

Justice Conley also addressed the appointment of new commission members, whose terms are set by Supreme Court Order and follow a two-year cycle. Current appointments expire on January 1, 2027. As gaps in collaborative representation were identified, several new members were added. He expressed appreciation to outgoing members, including Secretary Eric Friedlander for his steadfast support of the KJCMH, and Margaret Foresee for her dedication over the past year.

New members were welcomed to the commission, including Jayden Norris from NAMI- KY; Tanya Terry the Montgomery Circuit Clerk and President of the KY Circuit Clerk Association, who will replace Margaret Foresee; Johnny Blevins the Lewis County Sheriff and Vice President of the Law Enforcement Association; Dan Mosley, not in attendance, is the Harlan County Judge Executive; and Dr. Steven Stack, who will succeed Secretary Friedlander.

Reports were provided on the commission’s community mapping efforts. The meeting materials included updates on community mapping in Webster, Union, Crittenden, and Bullitt counties. The next scheduled mapping events will take place in Lincoln and Clark counties.

The commission's 2025 legislation, Senate Bill (SB) 26, passed unanimously and was signed by the Governor on March 18, 2025. The bill addresses parental rights and disabilities and includes key elements: (1) establishing a definition of “disability” in KRS 199.011; (2)

amending KRS 199.471 to prohibit denial of adoption or placement based solely on disability; (3) requiring a documented review process for disability-related placement decisions; and (4) updating KRS 625.050 and KRS 625.090 to prevent termination of parental rights based solely on disability, while encouraging consideration of reasonable accommodations.

The Commission recognized Crystal Adams, Judge Vanover, and Senator Brandon Storm for their efforts. The bill will take effect on June 27, 2025. The Executive Committee also met to review legislative recommendations for 2026, with next year's efforts focused on improvements to the 202C process for individuals adjudicated incompetent to stand trial who are charged with qualifying serious offenses.

Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities: Strategic Initiatives

Dr. Katie Marks, Commissioner of the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, presented alongside Dr. David Susman, Executive Advisor in the Office of the Commissioner.

Dr. Marks highlighted key findings from the annual report, including services provided to 148,793 Kentuckians through Community Mental Health Center (CMHC) programs and 7,303 through residential programs. Utilization of the 988 hotlines via CMHC crisis lines increased by 27%, with over 70,000 Kentuckians served. She also reported a 9.8% decrease in overdose deaths in 2023. Dr. Marks emphasized that adult mental health services extend beyond behavioral health to include resources like housing, peer support, outreach, case management, personal care homes, shelters, and prisons. Regarding forensic services, Dr. Marks noted their priority in expanding access.

Dr. Marks introduced the 1915(i) Recovery, Independence, Support, and Engagement (RISE) initiative, launching on July 1, 2025, to support individuals with severe mental illness (SMI), mental health conditions, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. The goal of RISE is to reduce hospitalization and incarceration by improving access to housing, transportation, and other necessary services. This initiative will offer 10 services, including supervised residential care, in-home independent living, housing, and tenancy supports, supported employment, supported education, transportation, medication management, planned respite for caregivers, assistive technology, and case management. For the first time in Kentucky, Medicaid funds will provide tenant supports. Dr. Marks urged the group to raise awareness and promote provider participation, as applicable.

Lastly, Dr. Marks reviewed trends in SMI, substance use disorder, and co-occurring conditions. She reported a 30.2% reduction in overdose deaths from 2021 to 2024 and emphasized the need for a comprehensive, continuous, integrated system of care, particularly for individuals with co-occurring conditions who face the worst outcomes. She called for regional convenings to discuss system redesign and bring people together for these critical conversations.

Dr. Susman spoke about the complexity of co-occurring conditions, stating that “everyone has complex needs.” He highlighted successful collaborations with the judicial system, including the Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program, which has received state funding to continue its work. Dr. Susman reported that AOT courts are now active in 17 counties, covering 45% of the state's population, with a goal to expand to 75% within the next year. He discussed the significant Medicaid cost savings associated with AOT, averaging \$1,326 per month per person during AOT and \$1,106 per month per person after AOT.

Dr. Susman also touched on Seth’s Law, thanking the partners who helped pass the bill and the positive impact in reducing wait times for inpatient assessments by enabling outpatient assessments. He outlined future priorities, including pilot programs for Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) teams at three CMHCs, enhancements to the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) curriculum, a workgroup focused on jail mental health services to understand current gaps, and the development of alternative transportation models for KRS 202A.

Dr. Marks emphasized the importance of integration, stating, "People are the intervention. We do not just want to partner; we want to integrate."

Deputy Chief Justice Conley referenced the quarterly reports included in the meeting materials and transitioned to the committee chairs to lead the next portion of the discussion.

Committee and Workgroup Updates

A. Treatment and Access Committee

Amy Luttrell provided an update on the Treatment and Access Committee. She highlighted the ongoing efforts of the workgroups, noting that they are actively expanding their work plans and making progress on key action items. She highlighted the strength of the workgroups and the valuable leadership provided by workgroup leads and committee chairs. Amy also recognized the contributions of Dr. Jasinski and Dr. Woods, who have launched new initiatives. She shared that each group is currently reviewing and updating their workplans as part of their annual process.

- a. Dr. Marc Woods, Chief Nursing Officer at Eastern State Hospital, assumed co-lead role of the Strengthening Communities Workgroup this quarter. The group reviewed its workplan to identify key priorities and observations, including challenges related to limited access to stable resources, inadequate transportation, and the need for educational materials on Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD). Members were provided a survey to help determine which observations should be prioritized in the upcoming quarter. At the next meeting, the group plans to finalize the workplan based on survey feedback and receive an update on the MOUD virtual training initiative.
- b. Crystal Adams, Director of the Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, provided an update on the Intellectual and Developmental Disability Workgroup. The group received a status report on SB 26, which supports parents and caregivers with disabilities and was signed into law this quarter. The workgroup will continue discussing implementation strategies at the next meeting. During this quarter, two training modules focused on intellectual and developmental disabilities were finalized and published. Members also received a presentation from the Division of Motor Vehicle Licensing on the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Communication Program, which will inform ongoing conversations around best practices for self-identification models. The group expressed interest in exploring KRS 202B training related to involuntary admission procedures. Adams also stated the Autism Workgroup has materials under review and pending approval, and they hope to roll out soon.
- c. Judge Stephanie Pearce Burke, District Court Judge for the 30th District, provided an update on recent Court Responses Workgroup activities. The group received an update on AOT and noted the importance of prioritizing funding, expansion opportunities, and exploring peer support specialist roles for AOT participants. The workgroup also reviewed and updated its workplan priorities, which include conducting Mental Health First Aid trainings, developing educational materials for judges and court personnel, and examining barriers to driver's license reinstatement. Lastly, members reviewed the 2026 legislative recommendation survey to inform future policy proposals.

B. Civil and Family Justice Committee

Judge J. Foster Cotthoff, 3rd Judicial District, provided the update for the Civil and Family Justice Committee. He expressed his gratitude to the commission support staff for their assistance throughout the year and extended holiday greetings to the group. Judge Cotthoff noted that the committee's last meeting focused on community mapping report and workgroup updates. He highlighted efforts to advance focus areas, develop resources such as bench cards, explore existing programs, and review Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) forms to enhance processes. He also praised the workgroup chairs for their leadership and dedication.

- a. The Honorable Denise Brown, Family Court Judge for the 30th Judicial Circuit, shared updates from the Domestic Violence Workgroup. She reported that the bench card on withdrawing protective order petitions has been finalized and submitted for printing. Physical copies will be distributed at the upcoming Judicial College, and a digital version will also be available on the KJCMH website.

Workgroup member Nick Davis will co-present with Indica Meeks (AOC) at the Judicial College on the use of risk assessment tools in domestic violence cases. The subgroup continues to develop training materials aimed at strengthening domestic violence education for court personnel.

The group met twice in the past quarter and discussed community feedback regarding the process following the dismissal of a protective order. A key focus is increasing awareness that individuals can refile without needing new incidents if a hearing was not held. The group is also encouraging judges to reflect on their awareness of post-dismissal procedures.

Additionally, Judge Brown discussed the new domestic violence awareness posters that are finalized and will be available for distribution to interested courts or partners.

Domestic Violence Advocacy in Schools subgroup is working to identify evidence-based programs to support advocacy efforts in schools, including the 4th R Program from Texas. Members are exploring opportunities to promote this program through the Kentucky Superintendent's Webcast in July.

Multidisciplinary Teams & Resource Access subgroup is collecting input from individuals with lived experience to guide the development of a printed brochure and related tools aimed at improving access to domestic violence services. The group will continue developing these resources in upcoming meetings.

- b. Judge Marcus Vanover, 28th Judicial Circuit, reported on the Dependency, Neglect & Abuse Workgroup's efforts. The group focused on system partner collaboration is moving forward with the *Relationships Matter Part 2* training series, with presenters confirmed for all five sessions. Recordings will begin in June, with rollout planned for August.

Judge Vanover discussed that the group examining treatment provider roles has drafted a bench card currently under review by AOC's Legal Office. The Best Practice Guide has also been updated and under review with the workgroup. A survey on workplan priorities was distributed and will be reviewed at the next meeting to guide future planning.

The training subgroup has scheduled three in-person trainings for court-appointed counsel: May 16 (London), May 23 (Hopkinsville), and June 16 (Frankfort). Post-training evaluations will inform fall session planning.

The workgroup is actively reviewing legislative recommendations related to the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) payment structure and oversight. As part of this effort, they are exploring the Oklahoma model as a potential framework for reform. During the May 22 meeting, Kentucky Youth Advocates formally requested the workgroup's support in improving the GAL process. While still in the early stages of development, the group plans to continue collaborating with youth advocates to advance this initiative. The Oklahoma model will serve as a primary reference point throughout the process. The workgroup looks forward to participating in future discussions and will maintain ongoing communication with the commission to share progress and emerging recommendations.

- c. Guardianship and Commitment Workgroup: Judge Cotthoff advised that Stacy Tapke was unable to join the meeting and that a full update can be found in the provided materials.

C. Criminal Justice Committee

Judge Cole Adams Maier, 25th Judicial District, provided an update on the Criminal Justice Committee and expressed deep appreciation for the ongoing efforts of the workgroups and their leadership. She praised all workgroup leads for their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to advancing the committee's mission.

Judge Maier recognized the longstanding contributions of Judge Jones and Dr. David Susman, both of whom have been involved since the committee's inception. Their subject matter expertise and strong work ethic continue to shape the committee's progress. She noted that Dr. Susman's recent presentation, described as including "bonus features", highlighted key intersections with CIT work and the mental health workgroup for jails.

Judge Maier emphasized how encouraging it is to have experts aligned in their goals and efforts. The committees are currently developing proposed legislation, and the insights from these collaborative efforts, including the upcoming jail survey, will help inform and strengthen those policy recommendations.

- a) Dr. KOLEEN SLUSHER, Director of the Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center (KCPC), reported on recent updates within the Competency Workgroup. Members received an update on finalized AOC forms related to Seth's Law and competency hearings, which are now available for statewide use. The group discussed strategies to raise awareness of these changes, including a potential statewide webinar and development of a legislative response package to support implementation.

The KCPC shared recent data trends and observations following the enactment of Seth's Law. While the outpatient waitlist has increased, efforts are underway to reduce the wait time to 4–6 weeks. KCPC is also in the process of finalizing a response package for Seth's Law.

The workgroup continues to review competency-related resources from the Council of State Governments to guide future planning efforts. Members also received a presentation from the Louisville Metro Department of Corrections on its Jail-Based Competency Restoration Program and reviewed potential legislative recommendations in preparation for the 2026 session.

The group discussed YesCare's role in supporting jail-based competency assessments and the upcoming launch of a new jail-based restoration program

in Fayette County this summer. This initiative will serve both Eastern State Hospital and KCPC cases, addressing both civil and forensic needs.

Dr. Slusher also shared about the FACT model and the opportunity to partner with three CMHCs to support implementation strategies that serve individuals at the intersection of behavioral health and the criminal justice system.

- b) Pre-Arrest and Diversion Workgroup: Judge Maier advised that Steve Shannon had to leave the meeting early and that a full update can be found in the provided materials.

- c) Judge Lisa Jones, 1st Appellate District, Division 2, Kentucky Court of Appeals, provided the Juvenile Justice Workgroup update. Members received a briefing from Commissioner White on current initiatives within the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), and the group plans to request ongoing updates from DJJ to help inform future priorities and workplan development. Updates were also shared from the workgroup's two subgroups.

The Legislative Priorities Subgroup received a presentation from Nathan Goins (AOC) on the history of the presumption of criminal responsibility and the infancy defense. The subgroup also held discussions with county attorneys to gather input and better understand potential concerns, which will help shape upcoming legislative recommendations.

The Mapping Priorities Subgroup received a presentation from the Wanda Joyce Robinson Foundation, highlighting support for children and families impacted by incarceration. The presentation was also shared with the full workgroup in April. Additionally, the subgroup heard from the Juvenile Justice Intervention Services Program, which supports at-risk youth across Kentucky. Future updates are anticipated from SIAC's Rapid Response and Crisis Stabilization Workgroup.

- d) Reentry Workgroup: Judge Maier advised that Erica was unable to join and that a full update can be found in the provided materials. Judge Maier stated that the workgroup is currently waiting on the jail survey and conducting various educational outreach efforts. The group continues to focus on how to

change lives in small but meaningful ways and welcomes additional community participation.

Closing Remarks

Deputy Chief Justice Conley expressed gratitude to all chairs and members for their continued dedication and meaningful contributions. He highlighted the publication of the KJCMH 2023 Annual Report, a project initiated by Seth prior to his passing and completed by Shawna and her team. Published in Seth's honor, the report reflects the Commission's progress from August 2022 through December 2023 and is available online for review and sharing. Members were encouraged to take time to read the report and recognize the impactful work completed during the Commission's first year.

Justice Conley also noted that the 2024 Annual Report is underway and will be available at the next meeting. Details about the upcoming 2024 Virtual Forums will be shared by email, and members are welcome to attend without registering.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2025, at AOC, which will also mark the Commission's three-year anniversary. Members were thanked for their ongoing support and wished safe travels.

Contact information: JCMH@kycourts.net.

Webpage: [Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health – Kentucky Court of Justice \(kycourts.gov\)](https://www.kycourts.gov/Kentucky-Judicial-Commission-on-Mental-Health-Kentucky-Court-of-Justice)

The commission adjourned at 3:00 PM ET.

Additional Information

Noncommission Members and Public in attendance:

Name	Organization
Matt Code	Boone County Attorney Office
Mike G.	Lewis County Sheriff's Office
Sammi Gilliam	UNITE
Emily King	Behavioral Health Group
Jerod Metz	Boone County Attorney Office
Dr. David Susman	Executive Advisor, Office of the Commissioner, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

KJCMH Support Staff in attendance:

Name	Department
Jacindia Rowe	Kentucky Supreme Court
Hon. Angela Darcy	Pretrial
Hon. Jason Reynolds	Pretrial

Shawna Mitchell	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Jim Hoffman	Communications
Jason Dufek	Pretrial
Debbie Hall	Office of Statewide Programs
Heather Vice	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Rebecca Hisel	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Melana Gross	Pretrial
Audrey Collins	Specialty Courts
Ashley Clark	Family and Juvenile Services
Billy Ousley	Specialty Courts
Tina Morrow	Office of Statewide Programs
Ian Shepherd	Office of Statewide Programs
Hon. Eric Finke	Kentucky Supreme Court
Hon. Andrew Hartley	Kentucky Supreme Court
Jason L. McGinnis	Administrative Office of the Courts
Hon. Michael Pack	Pretrial