

KENTUCKY JUDICIAL COMMISSION ON MENTAL HEALTH



Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date, Time	September 16 th , 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	Director, Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Hon. Stephanie Burke	District Court Judge
Lisa DeJaco Crutcher (Zoom)	Executive Director/CEO, Catholic Charities of Louisville
Hon. J. Foster Cotthoff (Zoom)	District Court Judge
Becky Frost (Zoom)	Western State Hospital
Hon. Tyler Green	District Court Judge
Erica Hargis	Director of Division of Probation and Parole
Hon. Tanisha A. Hickerson	District Court Judge
Van Ingram	Executive Director of Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy
Hon. Debra Hembree Lambert	Chief Justice, Kentucky Supreme Court
Rabbi Shlomo Litvin (Zoom)	Director of Chabad of the Bluegrass
Lisa Lee (Zoom)	Commissioner of Department of Medicaid Services
Dr. Lindsey Jasinski	Chief Administrative Officer, Eastern State Hospital – University of Kentucky
Amy Luttrell	CEO, Goodwill
Hon. Cole Adams Maier	Circuit Court Judge
Katie Marks	Commissioner, Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Kimberly Moser	Representative
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
Dr. Koleen Slusher	LCSW, Director of Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center
Dr. Steven Stack	Secretary, Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Hon. John Lindsay Tackett (Zoom)	District Court Judge
Tanya P. Terry	Montgomery County Circuit Court Clerk, President of Kentucky Association of Circuit Court Clerks
Diane Thompson (Zoom)	Nelson County Circuit Court Clerk
Hon. Larry Thompson	Kentucky Court of Appeals
Hon. Marcus Vanover (Zoom)	Family Court Judge
Hon. Brian Wright (Zoom)	Past President of Commonwealth Attorney's Association
Ryan Bowman	Delegate — Ashli Watts
Hon. Wes Duke (Zoom)	Delegate — Eric Friedlander
Gracie Kelly	Delegate — J.D. Chaney
Wil Schroder	Delegate — Russell Coleman
Silas Session (Zoom)	Delegate — Whitney P. Allen, Jr.
Betty Whittaker	Delegate — Cora McNabb
John Wilson	Delegate — Jayden Norris
Christina Weeter	Delegate — Robbie Fletcher
Mona Womack (Zoom)	Delegate — Keith Jackson
Agenda <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Registration and Lunch II. Welcome and Commission Updates III. Administrative Office of the Courts: Behavioral Health Liaisons IV. Committee and Workgroup Updates V. Agency Update Roundtable VI. Closing Remarks VII. Adjourn 	
Welcome and Commission Updates <p>The Honorable Larry Thompson, Chief Judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals, welcomed and thanked the commission members for being present. Chief Judge Thompson recognized the Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health's (KJCMH) three-year anniversary. He reviewed KJCMH's highlights and accomplishments, including three statewide mapping initiatives completed, the Mental Health Summit, town hall meetings, regional recovery-oriented system of care summits, community mapping events, legislative efforts, publication of training resources, and a collaborative partnership of 84 organizations and individuals. He acknowledged that none of these successes would be possible without the dedication of the commission members.</p>	

Chief Judge Thompson referenced the commission materials, which included the agenda and the minutes from the June KJCMH Quarterly Meeting. He recognized Secretary Steven Stack, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, for stepping into the Vice Chair role for the Treatment and Access Committee. Chief Judge Thompson encouraged members to contact Shawna Mitchell, Maria Macaluso, or Heather Vice with any questions about the meeting materials.

Chief Judge Thompson highlighted recent initiatives, including fourteen regional forums titled *Serving Citizens through the 202A Process*. He provided an overview of KRS 202A, which governs emergency mental health evaluations and involuntary hospitalizations for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Across the fourteen regional sessions, invitations were extended to a wide range of justice, health, and community partners. In total, 553 individuals participated in these forums.

He also recognized community mapping events as a strong local engagement tool. Lincoln County's mapping workshop, held on September 5, 2025, was discussed along with related follow-up tasks. Upcoming mapping events are scheduled for Clark County (December 16, 2025), Hardin County (January 29, 2026), and Henderson County (February 3, 2026). To date, twelve counties have hosted community mapping workshops, resulting in twenty-five localized action plans to guide system improvements.

Chief Judge Thompson acknowledged the Commission's successful legislative packages and provided an update on the 2026 legislative package, which prioritizes reforms to KRS 202C. To advance these efforts, a focus group of system partners was created to help shape next steps.

Chief Judge Thompson then introduced Zach Ramsey, Director of the Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), to present on the newly created Behavioral Health Liaison (BHL) positions, designed to help the Commission implement change statewide.

Administrative Office of the Courts: Behavioral Health Liaisons

Director Zach Ramsey acknowledged the BHLs present and commended their commitment to the Commission's work. He provided background on the creation of the BHL positions within AOC, including a timeline and a coverage map illustrating the regions served. Director Ramsey highlighted the three key focuses of the BHL role: (1) judicial system navigation, (2) cultivating and enhancing community partnerships, and (3) crisis intervention. An informative BHL video was shared with meeting members and will be included in an upcoming media package. The video highlights how BHLs connect courts, communities, and partner agencies to promote a recovery-oriented system of care. Director Ramsey thanked the BHLs for their continued commitment and invited questions from Commission members.

Questions

Damon Preston, Kentucky Justice & Public Safety Cabinet, commended the BHL position and asked how the role interacts with pending cases. Specifically, he inquired whether BHLs would be involved if an alternative sentence worker (ASW) presents a plan.

Audrey Shields, AOC, clarified that the BHL role does not replace the ASWs but rather complements it. She explained how the BHLs function as a resource hub and can provide support at any stage.

No further questions were asked.

Chief Judge Thompson thanked Director Ramsey for his presentation and introduced Amy Luttrell to provide an update on the Treatment and Access Committee.

Committee and Workgroup Updates

I. Treatment and Access Committee

Amy Luttrell thanked Chief Judge Thompson and acknowledged Secretary Steven Stack for serving as Vice Chair of the committee. She highlighted ongoing efforts of the workgroups, noting the expansion of workplans and progress on key action items.

- a. **Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Workgroup-** Crystal Adams, Director of the Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, reported on the group's efforts to develop a training on KRS 202B for court system partners. The workgroup continues to advance Autism in the Courts training in collaboration with self-advocates and attorneys to ensure comprehensive support. Additionally, members are working on the implementation of Senate Bill 26 in partnership with the Department for Community Based Services.
- b. **Strengthening Communities Workgroup-** Dr. Lindsey Jasinski, Chief Administrative Officer at Eastern State Hospital, reported that the workgroup has refreshed its priorities and workplan goals. The workgroup collaborated on the Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) training series, which has been completed and is in the final stages of publication. The training features Judge Hays Spedding and Dr. Anna Maria South. Future plans include hearing a presentation on a national survey on MOUD, monitoring federal policy changes that may impact Kentucky, and incorporating strategies to reduce stigmatizing language into the workplan.
- c. **Court Responses Workgroup-** The Honorable Stephanie Pearce Burke, District Court Judge for the 30th District, provided an update on recent Court Responses Workgroup activities. Judge Stephanie Pearce Burke reported that the workgroup continues to explore training materials for judges and court personnel. Workgroup members also received updates on Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT), including funding and expansion opportunities, as well as the potential role of peer support specialists for AOT participants. The group plans to focus on barriers to Casey's Law petitions. Upcoming meeting dates include October 7, November 4, and December 7.

Treatment and Access Committee Chair Amy Luttrell asked Judge Burke where Kentucky stands on the national grading standard for treatment. Judge Burke explained that Kentucky has improved its score through the expansion of AOT and emphasized that further improvement will come through modernization of the KRS 202A statute.

II. Civil and Family Justice Committee

The Honorable J. Foster Cotthoff, 3rd Judicial District, reported that the committee's workgroups remain focused on advancing workplan priorities and conducting trainings with system partners.

- a. **Domestic Violence Workgroup-** The Honorable Denise Brown, Family Court Judge for the 30th Judicial Circuit, was unable to attend. A full update was included in the meeting materials.
- b. **Dependency, Neglect & Abuse-** Honorable Marcus Vanover, 28th Judicial Circuit, reported on the progress of several subgroups within the Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse (DNA) Workgroup. He noted that the subgroup focused on the role of treatment providers is developing training materials and has shifted from creating a bench card to a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) format to better reach a broader audience, while still considering a bench card for future development. He also highlighted the subgroup's continued efforts to create a comprehensive best practice guide to support families involved in DNA cases.
Judge Vanover further reported that the Relationships Matter Part 2 training series, designed to strengthen collaboration and communication with system partners, was launched this quarter and is currently being presented. He also shared that the workgroup conducted three in-person trainings this past quarter to enhance court-appointed counsel training, reaching more than 130 attorneys. Additional training sessions are scheduled for November.
Lastly, Judge Vanover provided an update on legislative initiatives regarding the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) structure and payment. While these efforts are being led by other groups, the DNA Workgroup is closely monitoring these efforts.
- c. **Guardianship and Commitment Workgroup-** Stacy Tapke, Kenton County Attorney, was unable to attend. A full update was provided in the meeting materials.

Judge Cotthoff echoed the significance of the BHL role, thanking his region's BHL, Janice Cunningham, as well as the other BHLs for their continued contributions.

III. Criminal Justice Committee

The Honorable Cole Adams Maier, 25th Judicial District, provided an update on the Criminal Justice Committee and referenced the meeting materials. Key committee

priorities include data entry processes, jail survey data collection, review of juvenile competency standards, and the finalization of the Police Social Worker's white paper.

- a. **Competency Workgroup-** Dr. KOLEEN SLUSHER, Director of the Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center (KCPC), reported on the Competency Workgroup. She provided an update on KCPC's waitlist and the expansion of jail-based programming in Jefferson and Fayette Counties. Dr. Slusher also highlighted efforts to strengthen the forensic system through grant-funded treatment initiatives. She noted that the group is working toward developing updates to the Clerk's Manual to assist courts in KRS 504 cases. Additionally, she discussed barriers to Casey's Law petitions and how the workgroup will collaborate with Judge Burke and the Court Responses Workgroup on this issue.
Dr. Slusher further noted the impacts of Seth's Law. She also shared a success story involving KRS 202C patients who were supported through a Tim's Law petition in Jefferson County.
- b. **Pre-Arrest and Diversion Workgroup-** Steve Shannon, Executive Director of KARP, Inc., was unable to attend. Judge Maier provided the update on his behalf and referred attendees to the meeting materials for additional details.
- c. **Juvenile Justice Workgroup-** The Honorable Lisa Jones, 1st Appellate District, Division 2, Kentucky Court of Appeals, was unable to attend. Judge Maier reported on behalf of the Juvenile Justice Workgroup and referred attendees to the meeting materials for additional details.
- d. **Reentry Workgroup-** Erica Hargis, Director of the Division of Probation and Parole at the Department of Corrections, provided an update on the Reentry Workgroup. She reported that the group has engaged with dynamic speakers, reviewed the workplan, and is awaiting the jail survey results to guide future efforts. She highlighted how members heard from the Department of Corrections on reentry services. The workgroup plans to hear from Kentucky Career Centers in future meetings. The group also plans to hear updates on the jail survey and the BHLs' role in supporting this work. Erica thanked Dr. Jasinski and the EMPATH team for their contributions and work.

Judge Maier concluded by thanking Shawna Mitchell and her team and encouraged members to connect with Heather Vice regarding community mapping initiatives.

Agency Update Roundtable

Chief Judge Thompson thanked the committee chairs and workgroups for their continued dedication. He then invited agency representatives to share updates.

Christina Weeter, presenting on behalf of Kelly Foster with the Kentucky Department of Education, shared an update on chronic absenteeism and truancy. She explained that the Department is using

both the statewide student data system and AOC data to identify and target specific regions of concern. Ms. Weeter provided an overview of chronic absenteeism trends and discussed the impact of House Bill 611 on unexcused absences. She noted that the Department is focusing on identifying underlying factors contributing to absenteeism and is working to address these barriers through a statewide campaign, which is being promoted on social media and supported by community partners.

Commissioner Katie Marks provided an update on the rollout of co-occurring conditions programs, noting that the initiative has been well received. She explained how these programs are designed to integrate mental health and substance use services, breaking down barriers between the two systems.

Judge Maier inquired about the progress of the 1915(i) RISE initiative. Commissioner Marks explained that this Medicaid program offers recovery, independence, support, and engagement to Kentuckians with serious mental illness. She noted that her department is conducting extensive outreach to providers and encouraged members to connect interested providers or direct questions to her office.

Closing Remarks

Chief Judge Thompson thanked Commission members for their time and dedication, reflecting on the many accomplishments achieved during the Commission's three years of work. He reminded members that the next meeting will be held on December 5, 2025, at the AOC.

Contact information: JCMH@kycourts.net.

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

The commission adjourned at 3:00 PM ET.

Additional Information

Noncommission Members and Public in attendance:

Name	Organization
Harper Addison	Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center
Sydney Richardson	Kentucky Correctional Psychiatric Center
Dr. David Susman	Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities
Dr. Allen Brenzel (Zoom)	Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities
Tamara Hart (Zoom)	
Katherine North (Zoom)	Kentucky Association of Health Plans

KJCMH Support Staff in attendance:

Name	Department
Jacindia Rowe	Kentucky Supreme Court

Jason Reynolds	Pretrial
Shawna Mitchell	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Jim Hoffman	Communications
Debbie Hall	Office of Statewide Programs
Heather Vice	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Maria Macaluso	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Rebecca Hisel	Judicial Commission on Mental Health
Rachel Pate	Behavioral Health Liaison
Audrey Collins	Specialty Courts
Ashley Clark (Zoom)	Family and Juvenile Services
Indica Meeks	Behavioral Health Liaison
Robbie Kincer	Behavioral Health Liaison
Ian Shepherd	Office of Statewide Programs
Eric Fink	Kentucky Supreme Court
Nathan Goins	Family and Juvenile Services
Sheena Schlick	Behavioral Health Liaison
Chamie Markey	Behavioral Health Liaison
Shelley Brown	Behavioral Health Liaison
Nadalie Hardwick	Family and Juvenile Services
Billy Ousley	Specialty Courts