



PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

The Advocacy Institute Is Pleased to Present

Legal Arguments for Representing DCF in Children's System of Care Matters

**November 21, 2022
1:20 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.**

WEBINAR

Program Summary

Children named in Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P) litigation are often served by the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Children's System of Care (CSOC) for their mental health needs. At times, DCP&P and CSOC contractors may not initially see eye to eye on case planning and approach. This can present an interesting challenge for DCF Practice Group deputies, because they are responsible for representing the entire agency, including CSOC. This session will address how deputies can effectively represent DCF by developing strategies to manage conflict between these two organizations before appearing in court.

There are also situations which may not involve DCP&P initiated litigation, but involve DCP&P, CSOC and the courts, such as Juvenile Delinquency or Mental Health Commitment matters. Understanding the individual legal responsibilities of DCF, DCP&P and CSOC, as well as the legal basis for CSOC decision-making (Medicaid level of care) is integral to representing the agency as a whole. The presenters will break down the legal issues in each situation and provide suggestions on how to approach the different courts within the limitations of those legal responsibilities so that deputies can fully represent DCF.

Eligibility

This program is only open to Deputy and Assistant Attorneys General in the DCF practice group and DCF agency attorneys invited to attend. Registrants will receive the course materials prior to the program date.

Faculty

DAG Peter Alvino is Section Chief of the DCF-North Section of the Division of Law's DCF Practice Group. He supervises 45 deputy attorneys general who represent the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in Hunterdon, Somerset, Warren, Sussex, Morris, Passaic, Bergen, Hudson and Union Counties. DAG Alvino has represented DCF (formerly DYFS) for over thirty years and has tried hundreds of child protection cases and handled numerous appeals, including six before the New Jersey Supreme Court. Before joining DOL, he was an associate at the firm of Cohn, Lifland, Pearlman, Herrmann and Knopf. Mr. Alvino holds a J.D. from Rutgers Law School, where he was an editor of the law review.

Melinda Carnassale is the Deputy Director of Operations for the Children's System of Care (CSOC) in the Department of Children and Families. She has served the department in both the Division of Child Protection and Permanency and within CSOC. Prior to joining DCF, Melinda oversaw operations in both a youth residential program and a youth crisis shelter. Melinda holds a Bachelor's in Psychology from Arcadia University and a Master's in Public Policy and Administration from Rutgers University.

Alex Encarnacion is the Assistant Director to the Office of Constituent Affairs for the Division of the Children's System of Care (CSOC). He has also served the CSOC as a Service Line Manager and as a Supervisor for In-Home Services for children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Mr. Encarnacion has worked to strengthen and ensure departmental collaboration, serving as a member of the CSOC leadership team, a member of the Applied Behavioral Analysis Policy & Quality Assurance Committee, and a member of the Joint Application Design team. Mr. Encarnacion has also provided analytical leadership and expertise in the management of targeted in-home and community-based programming. Before joining CSOC, he served in a variety of roles in DCF, including Permanency, Intake, and Impact Team Supervisor. He earned BAs in Sociology and Spanish from Drew University.

Dale Mooney, LCSW is the Statewide System Partner Lead for Children's System of Care (CSOC), Department of Children and Families. She works within the CSOC Office of Community Services as lead to the CMO's throughout the state. She previously served as the CSOC's Liaison to the Judiciary within the Office of Constituent Affairs. Before joining CSOC, Ms. Mooney was a caseworker within the Division of Youth and Family Services. She also served as the intake screener, as well as a supervisor for the new worker training unit. She holds an MSW from Monmouth University.

Sarah Skwirut is the Legal Affairs Liaison for the Children's System of Care (CSOC) Office of Legal Affairs. She assists CSOC with advisory opinions for contractual and health related matters, participates in CSOC program meetings, and advises CSOC on Medicaid related matters. She also serves as a liaison to the Attorney General's office on CSOC appeals, drafts CSOC policies and system partner guidance, and serves as CSOC legal advisor in interactions with contracted agencies and other State agencies. Additionally, Ms. Skwirut serves as the Department's designee on various statewide committees and working groups. Before joining CSOC, she served as an Area Quality Coordinator where she was responsible for directing and monitoring continuous quality improvement activities as well as utilizing data collection and analysis to enhance child welfare case practice in DCP&P Local Offices. Ms. Skwirut started her career at DCF as a caseworker

with the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP), and subsequently held various roles in supervision, resource development, and case practice. She has a BA in Psychology and an MSW from Rutgers University.

CLE Credit

NJ CLE Credit: This program has been approved by the Board on Continuing Legal Education of the Supreme Court of New Jersey for 1.5 hours of Alternative Verifiable Learning Format (AVF) total CLE credit. Of these, 0.0 qualify as hours of credit for ethics/professionalism.

Registration

Those who are eligible to apply should use the Zoom Webinar registration link in the Program Announcement email. Students who are registered will receive a confirmation email with a link to access the program.

Students must download Zoom before the webinar in order for the AGAI to record polling responses that are required for attendance verification and CLE credit.

The AGAI will be unable to verify attendance or grant CLE credit to students who have not downloaded Zoom before the webinar.