



Vermont Judicial Commission on Family Treatment Dockets

On January 17, 2018, the Supreme Court announced the establishment of the Vermont Judicial Commission on Family Treatment Dockets. The Supreme Court established the Commission in response to the dramatic upsurge in child protection cases fueled by the opioid crisis. The Commission will work across the justice system to identify the most efficient and effective ways to deliver necessary services to families with children impacted by the opioid crisis.

Overview

Chief Justice Paul Reiber chairs the Commission, which includes representation from all three branches of State government. The Commission will study evidence-based techniques that other states have deployed successfully to promote family reunification and timely permanency for children involved child protection cases. It will make recommendations to the Supreme Court for ways to pilot successful practices as well as for options to afford statewide access to family treatment docket techniques, if warranted and consistent with the policies of the Supreme Court.

The Commission will issue an interim report to the Supreme Court by July 1, 2018, and it will issue its final report by December 1, 2018.

Position

The Supreme Court **supports** the Commission's interbranch collaboration to inventory responses in other states to addiction-driven increases in child protection cases and to recommend practices suitable for the unique needs and challenges of Vermont.

Impact

To support the Commission, the Judiciary entered into a contract with the National Center for State Courts for technical assistance and hired a part-time project manager. The Judiciary is paying for the Commission's work with general funds accrued through vacancy savings.

Background

The creation of the Commission on Family Treatment Dockets follows an October 2017 presentation by Douglas Marlowe, J.D., Ph.D., Chief of Science, Law, & Policy at the National Association of Drug Court Professionals, who spoke with representatives from the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branches of Vermont State Government about best practices in problem-solving court dockets, such as the treatment dockets; addressed some of the challenges Vermont's treatment dockets have faced; and framed treatment docket options within a broader continuum of treatment options to be considered by those responsible for state policy issues.

For More Information

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