

# SOCIAL SERVICE EXPERT NEWS

Committee for Public  
Counsel Services

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Edition 1, Volume 3

*Your place for SSE news, updates, training notices and more.*

As we were putting the finishing touches on our latest newsletter, we found ourselves in uncharted territory. The emergence of Covid-19 has left us all trying to adjust to the “the new normal” while at the same time serving our clients. We wanted to take this opportunity to provide guidance about contact with clients during the Covid-19 pandemic. We want to stress that health and safety are of paramount concern, so we urge you to follow current public health guidelines (such as those issued by the WHO, the CDC, or DPH) for any in-person contact you have with your clients and others. We also want to thank all of you for your dedication and commitment to your clients. No words can adequately convey our appreciation for all that you are doing to serve our clients. In addition, we want to remind you that divisional contacts are available to provide support and respond to questions you may have.

**EXTRA! EXTRA!**

**We now have a vendor webpage!**

<https://www.publiccounsel.net/soc/>

Additionally, the state is also providing daily direction regarding practice standards. Because of the ever-changing landscape, we thought it would be helpful to direct you to up-to-date services, resources, court mandates, and visitation restrictions. Each division is receiving daily information and it is our plan to post it on our new Vendor Webpage!

Finally, if you discover any helpful resources, please let us know so we can post it on the webpage. Stay safe and healthy!

## Getting Started on a Case

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What you need when  
starting a case:

- The ENTIRE APPROVED Motion for Funds.
- The NAC #.
- Letter of Engagement that specifies scope of requested work and services, and your role.
- Client contact information.
- Signed releases-remember do not contact anyone without permission from the attorney.
- The context/theory/criminal charges of the case.
- Timeline for any work product.

## GAINING ENTRANCE INTO AN ADULT CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

*Please note that current policies and procedures regarding entrance to correctional facilities are ever changing in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As of now, general visits have been suspended. Attorney visits are still being allowed.*



There may be times when your work requires you to meet a client in a correctional facility, but gaining entrance is not as simple as calling ahead. Most facilities require that non-attorney visits complete a background check, which can take several weeks for final approval. If asked to enter a correctional facility that you are not familiar with, here are some steps to take:

1. The hiring attorney should be responsible for getting you approved to enter a correctional facility. It is not a good use of your billable hours to do this.
2. The attorney should call the facility's superintendent's office and ask what is required to schedule a professional visit for a social work expert hired by the attorney to help on a client's case. You should let the attorney know that you would like to meet with the client face-to-face\* in one of the attorney rooms. \*(During the Covid-19 Crisis if you are even allowed to visit, it is unlikely it will be face-to-face.)
3. Typically, a letter or email provided by the hiring attorney requesting the visit with the client is required. The letter has your name, date of birth, your social security number and/or driver's license number, and the date and time of the visit. This is to run a CORI check on you. If you have documents for the client to sign, have the attorney write that you are bringing documents for review.
4. You will have to complete a visitor form when at the facility.
5. Once you are approved to meet with a client, bring a copy of the letter from the superintendent's office or email approving you. If you got the approval by phone, note the name of the person who informed you (usually the superintendent's administrative assistant), date and time of call. **Make sure to bring a government issued photo ID** (e.g., driver's license, state ID).
6. **Best Practice:** On the day of the visit, call the facility to be sure your client is there. Clients can be moved from a facility or brought to a medical appointment with little to no notice. This usually happens before 7am. Making the call prevents a wasted trip!
7. **Best Practice:** know the dress code for the specific facility you are visiting. A facility can refuse entrance for any reason, including not adhering to the dress code. The dress code lists are fairly long and often include sleeveless shirts, low-cut shirts, short skirts, clothing with offensive messages, hats, bandanas, shorts, coats, belts, jewelry, sandals, etc. The Department of Corrections (DOC) has banned anything with glitter, including in make-up and nail polish.
8. You will be required to place all of your possessions in one of the lockers provided. They often require a quarter. You will only be allowed to bring a pen and folder containing a pad of paper and any necessary documents when you enter the meeting area. You will need to go through a metal detector and will be required to remove your shoes when you do.
9. **There is no standard practice for the MA DOC facilities;** treat each DOC facility as a separate facility. The facilities can see if you have been approved to enter other facilities but that will not give you access to their facility if you don't have the proper clearance.

There are some correctional facilities, like Billerica in Middlesex, which requires you to complete a "Security Clearance Form Background Information Request and Waiver". Once cleared, you have clearance for 6 months at that specific facility only so long as you call ahead to schedule the visit.

**Updated information regarding client visitation can be found at:**

**Mass Trial Courts:** <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-court-system>

Two links specific to MA courts response to Covid 19:

<https://www.mass.gov/alerts/supreme-judicial-court-restricts-court-appearances-to-emergency-matters#undefined>

<https://www.mass.gov/guides/court-system-response-to-covid-19>

**MADOC:** <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-department-of-correction>

Notice of suspended visits: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/temporary-suspension-of-visits-at-doc-facilities/download>



**What to do when you and the attorney don't agree?** Despite your best efforts to work with an attorney, there may be times when this happens. Please reach out to your divisional contact if you need support. Just as we ask the attorneys, we request that you remain professional and refrain from putting clients in the middle of any conflicts you may be having with the attorneys.



There is a newly released **Information Memorandum** on Family Time from the Children's Bureau, and it is filled with resources on why family time (aka visitation) is so critical.

One of the main recommendations for lawyers, judges and all stakeholders in the system is to "remain cognizant that parent-child separation, even when necessary or for short time periods, causes trauma to children and parents."

This tool can help you in supporting a family when asking for family time in your cases:  
[https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.americanbar.org%2fgroups%2flitigation%2fcommittees%2fchildrens-rights%2ftrauma-caused-by-separation-of-children-from-parents%2f&c=E,1,luzDEJur1eQUxbKgF17zkMeW28iBht\\_bYzyvAYu5jOTkTeVcgPb7Q68GzhOsL\\_FXpCPNhd3yQ39rjIPhDgB9Nthwa9ltlOJGBn8I5a9&typo=1](https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fwww.americanbar.org%2fgroups%2flitigation%2fcommittees%2fchildrens-rights%2ftrauma-caused-by-separation-of-children-from-parents%2f&c=E,1,luzDEJur1eQUxbKgF17zkMeW28iBht_bYzyvAYu5jOTkTeVcgPb7Q68GzhOsL_FXpCPNhd3yQ39rjIPhDgB9Nthwa9ltlOJGBn8I5a9&typo=1)

**We would like to add to our list of experts in this area, let us know if this is one of your areas of expertise!!**

## *Our Work, Works!*

I wanted to reach out about Raquel's outstanding work in K's October 8, 2019, parole hearing. As you are aware, this matter involved several tricky issues. Specifically, i) a plan had to be created for reentry into another state; ii) because of the protective interests K faces in Massachusetts, he is held in Rhode Island; and iii) K was not arrested on the murder until he was an adult and already had an adult record.

In the face of these challenges, Raquel continued to do what she commonly does in such situations – she excelled. Raquel was able to develop a comprehensive plan in K's chosen community. She found a robust transitional program for K, in the new state. The program, for adult males focused on ex-offenders released from prison and set to return to the community, fit the client's needs. It not only provided housing, but also services and resources in the area including: education, employment assistance, peer mentoring, case management, health services, life skills, job readiness, and job placement assistance. The program allowed for continued progression and reintegration into society as, after the client entered and participated in the re-entry program for one year, he would become eligible for a step down program; which further supports ex-offenders who are in need of a stabilized living environment.

Not only did Raquel find this program but, she worked within the confines of an unknown situation. She discussed with the program K's present status (not yet granted parole), submitted an application, and was able to secure K's acceptance. She maintained communication with his newly assigned caseworker throughout this process. At the hearing, Raquel was able to secure and we were therefore able to submit a letter of acceptance into the program. What is more, we were also able to provide to the Parole Board the caseworker's assurance that he would be given transitional housing in the event that the Parole Board were to give him a positive vote. Additionally, Raquel obtained back-ups to this program. She found a secondary alternative housing option with another inclusive program that provided housing supports to families, veterans, and former inmates. Raquel's plan included additional elements such as mental health and educational components. The plan was so comprehensive that two different board members remarked on it during the hearing – calling it "thorough" and a "good plan."

Raquel also worked with the attorney in writing a memorandum to the parole board. She provided substantive input – of the reentry plan, education success/future goals, mental health needs/services, and his program completion at RI DOC. She also spoke directly with program providers at RI DOC about our client's participation and obtained an additional letter from an outside provider concerning his participation and progress in an internal reentry program.

Finally, Raquel also testified at K's parole board. Her testimony was both poignant and informative. She provided further detail on the reentry plan and spoke to K's humanity.

In this case, Raquel took a situation that was shaky and instilled it with hope. This was apparent in everything she did – from meetings with K, to the extremely detailed and thorough plan she created, to her testimony. Although we can never predict what the parole board might do –it is abundantly clear that her efforts led to the most important aspect of this case – she gave K a real chance for parole.

NASW has set five social justice priorities to address over the next year: voting rights, criminal justice reform, immigration reform, economic justice, and equity. To learn more visit:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/Advocacy/Social-Justice/Social-Justice-Issue-Briefs>

## Upcoming Trainings & Conferences

**"We the Defenders" Social Workers & Sentencing Advocates:**

[https://www.publicdefenders.us/ev\\_calendar\\_day.asp?date=9/28/2020&eventid=179](https://www.publicdefenders.us/ev_calendar_day.asp?date=9/28/2020&eventid=179)

**2020 National Organization of Forensic Social Work (NOFSW) Conference:**

<https://www.emedevents.com/c/medical-conferences-2020/2020-national-organization-of-forensic-social-work-nofsw-conference>

**NASW MA Symposium:** <https://www.naswma.org/page/Symp20soon>

Be on the lookout for information about  
upcoming Vendor Roundtables in  
Middlesex County and Western MA!

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# Mark Your Calendar

Webinar series for

Judges ■ Treatment Court Professionals ■ Probation Officers ■ Pretrial Officers ■  
Child Welfare Professionals ■ Court Administrators ■ Front-line Court-related Professionals

## Pregnant Women and Opioids

April 6, 2020 ■ 4:00-5:00 PM (ET)

### BASICS OF MAT AND PREGNANT WOMEN

*Learning Objectives:*

1. Understand the importance of identifying OUD in pregnant women and how to identify OUD in pregnant women.
2. Identify the benefits of pharmacotherapy during pregnancy (fully informed consent).
3. Understand the Components of Pre and Postnatal Care to include MAT.
4. Identify the seven steps judges can take to improve outcomes for substance exposed infants and their families.
5. Questions
6. Resources

*Presentations by:*

Stephen Lloyd, MD  
Tennessee  
Barbara Howes, PhD, Clinical Social Worker  
Michigan  
Duane Slone, J.D., Circuit Court Judge  
Tennessee  
Sue Dobrich, J.D., Family and Probate Judge  
Michigan

May 4, 2020 ■ 4:00-5:00 PM (ET)

### TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN AND POSTNATAL CARE

*Learning Objectives:*

1. Recognize the prevalence of trauma among pregnant women for court involved women.
2. Identify trauma informed behavioral interventions.
3. One Person's Voice
4. Questions
5. Resources

*Presentations by:*

Cara Poland, MD, Med, FACP, DFASAM  
Michigan  
Michael Marcotte, MD  
Ohio  
Kim Kehl, M.Ed.  
Ohio  
Duane Slone, J.D., Circuit Court Judge  
Tennessee  
Sue Dobrich, J.D., Family and Probate Judge  
Michigan

Presented by the Appalachian/Midwest Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative (RJOI)



## REGISTER TODAY

(Click on one or both sessions below to register. You must register to attend.)

**[April 6<sup>th</sup> Basics of MAT and Pregnant Women](#)**

**[May 4<sup>th</sup> Trauma-informed Care for Pregnant Women and Postnatal Care](#)**

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To access links to all the trainings and registrations, right click on the link and choose “copy hyperlink” then paste in a new browser.

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# Helpful Resources and Links

**One Can Help:** <https://onecanhelp.org/>

“We work with court-appointed attorneys and social workers to provide clients at risk with essential resources when no other aid is available, to help them break the cycle of deprivation and hopelessness.” Resources available in juvenile court case (Primarily CAFL & YAD).

**National Association of Forensic Counselors:** (<http://www.forensiccounselor.org/>)

**The National Board of Forensic Evaluators:** (<https://www.nbfe.net/>)

**William James College Continuing Ed/Life Long Learning:**  
<https://www.williamjames.edu/academics/lifelong/index.cfm>

**Massachusetts General Hospital: Center for Law, Brain & Behavior:** <http://clbb.mgh.harvard.edu/>

“The Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Law, Brain, and Behavior is an academic and professional resource for the education, research, and understanding of neuroscience and the law.”

**National Alliance on Mental Illness, Massachusetts:** <https://namimass.org/>

**Bureau of Substance Addiction Services (BSAS):**

Helpline: <https://helplinema.org/>

Search for Treatment: [https://mahelplineonline.custhelp.com/app/account/opa\\_interview](https://mahelplineonline.custhelp.com/app/account/opa_interview)

**Sentencing Project:** <https://www.sentencingproject.org/>

**Family Resource Centers:** <https://www.frcma.org/>

## Re-Entry Services

**Coming Home Directory Greater Boston:**

[http://www.cominghomedirectory.org/assets/2019/02/CHD\\_Print\\_Final\\_With-cover-2019.pdf](http://www.cominghomedirectory.org/assets/2019/02/CHD_Print_Final_With-cover-2019.pdf)

**Office of Returning Citizens, Boston:** <https://www.boston.gov/departments/returning-citizens>

**After Incarceration Support Systems (AISS), Hampden:** <http://hcsdma.org/aiss-3/>

**Worcester Initiatives for Supported Reentry (WISR):** <https://www.advocates.org/services/worcester-initiative-supported-reentry-wisr>

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## **BILLING**

While we can help with some billing questions, your best resource for answers is the Vbill User Manual or you can email [vendorbills@publiccounsel.net](mailto:vendorbills@publiccounsel.net) with any questions. That being said, here are a few quick reminders.

- Travel time is billable. The rate is lower than the hourly rate for other services and is prepopulated by VBill.
- Remember if you make a billable phone call during your travel time, you cannot bill for both services.
- Reminder FY2020 is from 7/1/19-6/30/20
- Billable hours per FY are capped at 1,650, and you can only bill up to 12 hours/day. Anything over those hours requires a waiver.
- There are timelines for submitting Vbills. Make sure you know what they are.

***Don't forget to keep us updated on new licenses, additional certifications or potential conflicts. If you have not done so already, please update the attached vendor information questionnaire.***

## ***Your Social Service Expert Contacts***

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If you have any questions or need guidance, please contact the person who oversees the Social Services Experts for that division.

**Kristin Dame, LMHC**

[kdame@publiccounsel.net](mailto:kdame@publiccounsel.net)

617-910-5815

**Private Counsel Division**

**Claudia Dunne, LICSW**

[cdunne@publiccounsel.net](mailto:cdunne@publiccounsel.net)

617-910-5753

**Youth Advocacy Division**

**Annabelle Frazier, LMHC, Ph.D.**

[afrazier@publiccounsel.net](mailto:afrazier@publiccounsel.net)

617-910-5807

**Mental Health Litigation Division**

**Meg Grant, LICSW**

[mgrant@publiccounsel.net](mailto:mgrant@publiccounsel.net)

617-910-5839

**Children and Family Law Division**

### **The Committee for Public Counsel Services**

- We Defend the Accused
- We Demand Justice
- We fight for the Rights of Parents and Children