



NJSBA launches new member benefit to provide mental health resources

To help stem the troubling decline in mental health and wellness among New Jersey's legal practitioners, the New Jersey State Bar Association is proud to roll out new a Member Assistance Program (MAP) that provides access to trained, experienced mental health professionals and resources.

Powered by mental health resource provider Charles Nechtem Associates, the free confidential service offers 24/7 phone, text or mobile access to a mental health professional with at least seven years of experience, who will provide individual counseling and connect members with a wellness library of more than 25,000 self-help resources. The program is now available to all NJSBA members and those in their households.

The program aims to ease the difficult proposition attorneys face in accessing quality mental health care. Many are forced to either wait months for an appointment with a practitioner who accepts the right insurance, or pay out-of-pocket to expedite the process.

Along with the 24/7 phone access, MAP also offers up to three free face-to-face counseling sessions for all members and those in their household per issue they face. Phone, email and virtual counseling sessions and consultations are unlimited. As part of the service, each client receives a comprehensive behavioral risk assessment to diagnose the nature and severity of the issue and a treatment plan. If further counseling or treatment is needed,

referrals are made to providers within the client's insurance network or to providers who will take reduced fees if the client is uninsured.

NJSBA President Timothy F. McGoughran said the service will be a boon for members who need immediate assistance in dealing with the stress of their daily lives, as people and professionals.



"Ours is a profession that is suffering a mental health and wellness crisis. That is why in the year ahead, the Association will work to provide our members and colleagues with real, practical solutions to improve their lives, and, in turn, their practices," McGoughran said.

The idea for a mental health member benefit evolved from the Association's review of the New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program and the NJSBA's Putting Lawyers First Task Force report that uncovered high rates of stress, burnout, suicidal ideations, anxiety and depression among the state's legal practitioners.

Immediate Past NJSBA President

Jeralyn L. Lawrence, who made attorney wellness one of the centerpieces of her tenure, said the MAP will help fulfill the its mission to make the practice of law easier and less stressful for attorneys.

"It was time to look at what was causing the mental health crisis among our friends and colleagues and identify areas that need to change, and develop

tion and access to services while traveling. Its mission is to "provide innovative, effective, research-based easy access" to mental health services that allow for "rapid response, skilled solution-focused intervention and accurate diagnosis."

A free webinar to introduce members to the program's features is scheduled for June 13. **Register today at njsba.com.**

Contact MAP Counselors Anytime

1-800-531-0200

Phone counseling services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year with immediate access to clinicians. Access to English and Spanish speaking therapists, with other languages upon request.

Text via the CNA app

Available from the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Connect via the website, charlesnechtem.com

Click "Member Login" and log in as a new user. The employer is NJSBA.

Email

Reach out to inquiries@charlesnechtem.com

Minorities in the Profession Section presents...

JUNETEENTH

From Enslavement to Empowerment
Why Representation Matters

Thursday, June 8 | New Jersey Law Center | 5:30–8 p.m. | FREE registration at njsba.com



Pride Month celebrated with flag-raising ceremony

The New Jersey State Bar Association kicked off Pride Month with a flag-raising ceremony on June 1. NJSBA President Timothy F. McGoughran joined members of the Association's LGBTQ Rights Section to hoist the rainbow-colored PRIDE Flag over the New Jersey Law Center in New Brunswick, where it will fly until the end of June. ■



Photos by Amanda Brown

NJSBA testifies on DICE, family law rules amendments before Supreme Court

The New Jersey State Bar Association testified last week on several state Supreme Court reports. Representatives of the Association provided commentary on the Family Practice Committee and the Report of the Committee on Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement (DICE).

DICE report

NJSBA Trustee Valerie A. Jackson presented the Association's comments on proposed recommendations of the DICE report. She testified to the NJSBA's strong support for the recommendations in the report, pointing out its suggestions to strengthen diversity initiatives in the courts. She praised the report's advice to change the word "indigent" to focusing on the ability of litigants to pay and urged a more generalized approach to implement recommended language changes across the board.

In addition, the Association supported the following recommendations:

- encouraging the formation of a working group to address the effect and relevance of true poverty calculations to the courts in place of the federal poverty level;
- identifying those court proceedings where participation can be effectively accomplished remotely, adding that additional consideration should be given to partnering with public libraries and other local and state organizations to further assist court participants in connecting remotely, allowing those who generally struggle to access the technology needed to appear remotely to be able to do so without having to travel to court for otherwise administrative appearances;

- supporting the use of confidential hearings for name change applications to address the privacy concerns of people who are transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary; and
- encouraging efforts to increase the number of law clerks who are

dations of the Court's committee. On co-parent adoptions, the NJSBA supported an amendment to R. 5:10-17, which clarifies that no background checks of any kind, nor the provision of social security numbers are required.

Much of the focus of the testimony

when and whether a parenting coordinator's recommendations shall be binding or non-binding;

- clarifying that a retired Superior Court judge is precluded from serving as a parenting coordinator; and
- barring parenting coordinators from serving in dual sequential roles in a matter including as an attorney, guardian ad litem, mediator, arbitrator, custody evaluator, therapist, coach, consultant, or other mental health role for either party or a child in the matter.



CAPITOL REPORT

diverse to provide valuable training and experience for new attorneys, recommending that the collection of demographic data to better understand the composition of the applicant pool and effectiveness of outreach and recruitment efforts be expanded to include additional groups and characteristics critical to ensuring diversity among law students and law clerks.

The NJSBA offered additional recommendations for the Judiciary's consideration including continued or expanded outreach to affinity bar associations to increase the diversity of the law clerk applicant pool; expansion beyond the state's law schools to law schools in the region to recruit law clerks; and the implementation of timeframes for law clerk diversity initiatives.

Changes to family practice

Immediate Past Family Law Section Chair Derek M. Freed testified on several rules dealing with co-parent adoptions and parenting coordinators, speaking favorably on the recommen-

was on proposed new rule 5:8D dealing with parenting coordinators. The NJSBA drafted a proposed rule addressing the use of parenting coordinators in family court. The Association supports the rules as a way to regulate and make uniform the parenting coordination process. The proposed new rule would clearly define who may serve as a parenting coordinator and the scope and limits of their authority. The NJSBA presented the Supreme Court with recommendations to clarify the rule including:

- a reference to the appendix of the Court Rules to include an administrative directive and sample form of order;
- clarifying language as to when and why a parenting coordinator may be appointed and specifying that one only be appointed when parenting issues arise;
- including language to clarify how parenting coordination appointments would be terminated in instances involving domestic violence;
- amendatory language to clarify

This is a status report provided by the New Jersey State Bar Association on recently passed and pending legislation, regulations, gubernatorial nominations and/or appointments of interest to lawyers, as well as the involvement of the NJSBA as amicus in appellate court matters. To learn more, visit njsba.com.

NJSBA

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Information in the *Bar Report* is compiled by the New Jersey State Bar Association, which welcomes tips and story ideas from its readers and members. Contact Thomas Nobile at tnobile@njsba.com or 732-937-7527.