

**Minutes
Public Service and Trust Commission
Pro Bono Committee
Subcommittee on Metrics
March 15, 2011
2:00 PM**

**Teleconference
225 Spring Street, 2nd Floor, Room 206
Wethersfield, CT**

The first meeting of the Public Service and Trust Commission Pro Bono Committee Subcommittee on Metrics was held by teleconference at 225 Spring Street, 2nd floor, room 206, Wethersfield, CT at 2:00 p.m.

Members participating via telephone: Hon. William Bright (chair), Attorney Catherine Mohan, and Attorney Barry Hawkins.

At 2:02 p.m. Judge Bright called the meeting to order.

1. Judge Bright stated the charge of the Subcommittee on Metrics is to measure the success of different pro bono initiatives.
2. A discussion was held on using attorney self-reporting of pro bono activities as a way to measure success of pro bono initiatives. Judge Bright suggested that questions regarding pro bono activities could be included on the annual attorney registration form. The data would be collected anonymously and used for informational purposes only. The data could be compared from year to year looking at the number of hours provided; number of attorneys; types of services, etc. Staff was asked to confirm whether online attorney registration is mandatory and whether there are any exemptions.

A brief discussion was held on the need to clearly define the meaning of pro bono in the context of reporting. It was noted that there are different definitions of pro bono, e.g., the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA) recognized definition, and personal definitions of pro bono that may exceed the CBA definition. Judge Bright suggested that because the focus is on providing legal services for people who cannot afford to pay, pro bono services provided to non-profits which serve the indigent, for example through the Pro Bono Partnership, might be included when reporting, but should be identified separately from pro bono services provided directly to individuals.

Issues related to mandatory self-reporting were identified. Judge Bright noted that mandatory self-reporting provides more complete statistics, but has been rejected in some states such as Massachusetts in favor of voluntary self-reporting because of attorneys' concerns that it will lead to mandatory performance of pro bono activities. It was agreed that the Subcommittee must get feedback and address concerns before moving forward.

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An issue identified is attorneys' concerns that information regarding individual attorney's pro bono activities will not be anonymous in that it might be disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and could be used for punitive purposes. Attorney Mohan was asked to look into the issue of anonymity with the Freedom of Information Commission.

Another issue identified is attorneys who practice in small firms, solo practitioners, and government attorneys may feel limited in their ability to provide pro bono services due to conflicts or time issues. Judge Bright suggested getting feedback from local Bar Associations as these attorneys often are members of the local Bar. Judge Bright offered to speak to the Tolland County Bar Association this week.

Attorney Hawkins was asked to get feedback from the CBA, where he is currently Chair of the Pro Bono Committee.

3. A date for the next Subcommittee meeting will be discussed at the March 23rd meeting of the Pro Bono Committee.
4. The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.