

## **LSBA Legal Services for Persons with Disabilities Committee**

Friday, April 3, 2020

New Orleans, LA

### **Participants:**

Garret DeReus, Bizer & DeReus, LLC

Lauren Godshall, Tulane University School of Law (co-chair)

Gwynne Mashon, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services

Sean Morrison, Attorney at Law

Elena Perez, Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (co-chair)

Dayna Ryan, Theus, Grisham, Davis & Leigh, LLC

Gwender Sterling, Attorney at Law

Derek Warden, Attorney at Law

### **Guests:**

Zachary Simmons, Loyola Law School

### **ATJ Staff:**

Monte Moller, ATJ Director

Stephanie Beagh, Projects Counsel

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

- The committee welcomed new LSBA staff member, Stephanie, and new committee member Derek Warden.

## **2. COVID-19: Resources Available:**

- Garret DeReus's office filed a petition for preliminary injunction in federal court against the Louisiana Department of Health regarding ICU beds.
- SLLS is producing a lot of help information via videos, blogs, informational sheets and graphics about tenants' rights, Medicaid, veteran benefits, food stamps, etc. They are trying to keep up to date on the information as it changes. Information is available on SLLS's website and social media; it has also been made available on NOLA Ready emergency alerts.
- Sean Morrison is on the board of Family Helping Families Northshore, and they are still hosting webinars. He mentioned concern about federal contracts being paid out.
- Dayna Ryan reached out to MCLE to see if they can relax the online CLE requirements.

## **3. Disability Law CLE 2019**

- a. Report** - A 4-hour CLE for lawyers to learn more about disability law, titled "Representing Clients with Disabilities: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You!" was held on November 22, 2019 in the Eastern District of Louisiana Federal Court. There were approximately 65 people in attendance. Presenters included: Garret DeReus,

Dayna Ryan, Gwynne Mashon, Steven Reed, Sean Morrison, and Christopher Sherwood.

- b. Recordings** - The speakers agree to review the recordings of their respective CLEs and will let the LSBA know if they agree to the publication of the recordings on the LSPD Committee page on the LSBA's website assuming there is space on the website to do so.
- c. Lessons Learned** – The Committee agreed that the location was easy and convenient for attendees. It was suggested to reserve Judge Zainey and his courtroom earlier in the year so that he can attend and give opening remarks. It was also suggested to have a back-up judge and courtroom just in case. Speakers agreed that attendees were engaged and asking questions.

#### 4. Disability Law CLE 2020

- a. **Programming** – Given the success of the 2019 CLE series, this committee would like to host another CLE. Derek Warden presents a disability CLEs at Tulane where he gives a short history on the disability rights movement and offered to present at the next CLE this committee hosts.
  - The committee discussed the issue of websites being ADA compliant for hearing impaired and sight impaired as a relevant topic.
- b. **Location/Moderator** – Co-chair, Lauren Godshall, moved to have this committee host another CLE in same location and around the same time of year.

#### 5. Reports

- a) **Interview Skills Training** – A second interview skills training took place in January 2020 at LSU during their Apprenticeship Week. Feedback was positive, and the training worked well because students practiced foundational interview skills before being asked to interview vulnerable populations and overall, there was more time. In the future, try to secure an interpreter for the fact scenario involving a Spanish speaker. The committee also discussed hosting trainings at Loyola and Southern next.
- b) **LSBA Mid-Year Meeting CLE** – Dayna Ryan presented her LSPD CLE at the Mid-Year meeting on January 16, 2020. There were approximately 40 people in attendance. Feedback was that attendees were very interested and engaged.

#### 6. Policy/Legislative Updates

- Last meeting, this committee was looking at new Louisiana legislation opening up Medicaid to more children with disabilities (even if their parents' income would disqualify the children otherwise). – Dayna Ryan:

- New legislation signed by Governor John Bel Edwards, will allow children with disabilities (as defined by the Social Security POMS) to receive Medicaid, even if their parents' income would otherwise disqualify the children. This new law takes effect no later than June 1, 2020; however, Louisiana Department of Health still has to draft the specifics of coverage and send it to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to receive final approval and begin putting this law into action! A special thank you to Katherine Smitherman, LA Rep Dodie Horton and LA Rep Dustin Miller for seeing that this legislation came into being.
- Dayna didn't have any updates.
- The Committee considered whether any bills that were filed prior to the suspension of the legislative session were relevant to this committee and should be brought to the attention of the Board of Governor's Legislative Committee. Sean Morrison is on the Legislative Committee. This Committee discussed the recent electronic notarization issues and its effect on the disabled community. Committee members Lauren Godshall (co-chair), Sean Morrison, and Dayna Ryan agreed to work on letter to the Legislative Committee.

**7. Other Business** - Minutes from November 8, 2019 were accepted and approved by the Committee.

**8. Adjournment** – Next Meeting on May 29, 2020 at 12 PM