



2019 Annual Conference
Changing Minds, Changing Lives:
Rethinking Treatment for People Living with Serious Mental Illness

Saturday, November 2nd, 2019 in Norwood, MA

Afternoon Breakout Session
The Massachusetts Civil Commitment Process (1CE)

Presented by

Joseph A. Robinson, Esq.

**Trial Panel Director, Mental Health Litigation Division
Committee for Public Counsel Services**

&

Robert Mendoza, Psy.D.

**President, Boston Forensic Associates, LLC
Consultant, The Boston Home, Inc**

This presentation will provide participants with an overview of the Massachusetts Civil Commitment legal process from the time a patient is referred for an evaluation by a treating clinician until the adjudication of Petition for Commitment by a court.

Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize the legal procedural steps of the Massachusetts Civil Commitment process.
2. Explain the statutory and regulatory criteria used by Massachusetts Courts to determine whether to commit a seriously mentally ill person to an inpatient psychiatric facility.
3. Discuss the role of legal counsel for a patient with a serious mental illness in the context of the Massachusetts Civil Commitment process.

Joseph Robinson, Esq. is the Trial Panel Director for the Mental Health Litigation Division (MHL) of the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS). MHL provides attorneys to defend clients in Civil Commitment and Guardianship Petitions. The Trial Panel Director provides support and oversight to 300 private attorneys who represent clients throughout Massachusetts in Commitment and Guardianship proceedings. Prior to this position Joe was a trial attorney in CPCS's Bridgewater State Hospital Commitment concentrating on defending clients in forensic commitment cases filed by the Bridgewater State Hospital or

District Attorneys. In addition, Joe has, worked extensively with both public defenders and private practitioners on cases involving competence to stand trial and mental health evaluations and treatment of criminal defendants. Prior to joining CPCS, Joe spent 26 years in private practice both as a solo practitioner and in small firms, including 14 years as a member of the MHLA private attorney panel. Joe has represented Hospitals, Respondents, Family Members and Fiduciaries in Guardianship cases. He has argued appeals in the before the Supreme Judicial Court, the Appeals Court as well as cases in the Appellate Division of the District Court. He has represented clients in competency hearings in criminal cases and Petitions for Discharge of patients from the Massachusetts Treatment Center for sexually dangerous persons.

Dr. Robert Mendoza is a neuropsychologist has been working in the field of forensic mental health for over 20 years. He is hired for criminal and civil cases and performs a wide range of court related evaluations including criminal responsibility, competence to stand trial, commitment evaluations, and aid in sentencing evaluations. He has consulted on many homicide and multiple homicide cases and frequently lectures in these areas. Dr. Mendoza also provides educational and scientific presentations to undergraduate and graduate students, attorneys, as well as medical and mental health professionals throughout the United States.