

Vermont Judiciary Commission on Mental Health and the Courts

Second Annual Summit – Thursday, September 26, 2024

SPEAKERS & PANELISTS

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Vermont Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Reiber



Paul L. Reiber of Chittenden, Vermont was appointed to the Vermont Supreme Court by Gov. James Douglas, sworn in as an Associate Justice October 2003 and as Chief Justice December 2004. He was in private practice in Rutland, Vermont at Reiber, Kenlan, Schwiebert, Hall & Facey, P.C. at the time of his initial Supreme Court appointment. With Justice Karen Carroll he co-chairs the Vermont Judiciary Commission on Mental Health and the Courts. Previously he served as Chair of the Vermont Commission on Judicial Operation, which resulted in historic legislation that unified the Vermont state court system. As a member of the Conference of Chief Justices he served on the National Judicial Opioid Initiative, Co-Chaired the National Judicial Task Force to Examine State Courts' Response to Mental Illness and currently Co-Chairs the sequel to that effort, the Behavioral Health Committee. A Past President of the Conference of Chief Justices he also chaired the National Center for State Courts Board of Directors. He is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation and American Law Institute and is active in his local chapter of the American Inns of Court. B.A., Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia, 1970. J.D., Suffolk Law School, Boston, 1974. H. J.D., Vermont Law School, 2013. He and his wife Sandi have two daughters, three granddaughters, and two grandsons.

Vermont State Senator Virginia (Ginny) Lyons



VIRGINIA "GINNY" LYONS, of Williston, represents Chittenden SE. Senator Lyons chairs the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and serves on Appropriations, Joint Legislative Justice Oversight, and other committees. Among others, Sen Lyons' recent legislation includes improved access: to competency evaluations to stand trial; to mental health facilities for those judicially involved; for public safety to prevent violence against health care workers. Ginny is a college Biology professor with over 30 years of teaching, research, and administrative experience. She enjoys time with her retired husband and two grown daughters who live and work in VT.

VT Department of Mental Health Commissioner Emily Hawes



Commissioner Emily Hawes was appointed to lead the Department of Mental Health in July 2021. Originally from Kansas, Emily spent 10 years working in community mental health with adults enrolled with community support programs before relocating to Vermont. Prior to joining state government, Emily worked for Clara Martin Center in Randolph overseeing their criminal justice and substance abuse programs.

Commissioner Hawes has worked for DMH in several capacities for more than eight years, beginning as a Care Manager (liaison to the Department of Corrections and the Health Department's Division of Substance Use Programs) and then promoted to the Care Management Director role with statewide oversight over acute care beds for those under the care and custody of the Commissioner. In 2017, Emily moved into the Director of Operations, Planning and Development position with oversight for all grants, contracts, and the DMH Continuity of Operations Plan. She then took the helm of the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH), the state-run 25-bed acute care psychiatric hospital, serving as the CEO for four years preceding her appointment as Commissioner of Mental Health.

Hawes earned her BS in Rehabilitation Services and MS in Rehabilitation Counseling, both from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. She is also a licensed alcohol and drug abuse counselor (LADC) in the State of Vermont.

Keynote Speaker Hon. Gordon MacDonald



Gordon J. MacDonald is the 37th Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court. Following his confirmation by the Executive Council, he was sworn in by Governor Chris Sununu on March 4, 2021. As Chief Justice, MacDonald leads the New Hampshire Judicial Branch, which includes 45 Circuit and Superior Court locations around the state, as well as more than 800 employees. Chief Justice MacDonald currently serves as chair of the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR), which was created by the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) in 2023. Its charge is to consider reforms to legal education and bar admissions that would help address the critical challenges facing the legal profession. He also serves on the CCJ/COSCA Behavioral Health Committee. MacDonald served as New Hampshire's attorney general from April 13, 2017, until March 4, 2021. Prior to becoming attorney general, MacDonald was in private practice, most recently as a litigation partner in the Manchester office of Nixon Peabody LLP. Gordon J. MacDonald is the 37th Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court. Following his confirmation by

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Topic One – SIM Exercise Collaboration by Region to Date



Mental Health and the Courts Project Director Scott Acus

D. Scott Acus, MA, MSW, LICSW, is the Vermont Judiciary's Project Director for Mental Health and the Courts. His background includes 15 years as a therapist working with children and adults who have substance use or mental health challenges, followed by fifteen years leading mental health organizations providing residential, hospital, and outpatient care.



Superior Court Judge (retired) Kate Hayes

Katherine (Kate) A. Hayes is a retired superior judge. She is a graduate of Bryn Mawr College and the University of Michigan Law School. After nearly twenty years as an attorney in Vermont, in a variety of roles, she was appointed to the bench by Governor Howard Dean. She served as a superior judge from January 2003 through August 2023. She presided most frequently in the Family Division of the Windham Unit, which has among the most active mental health treatment dockets in Vermont. Judge Hayes continues to assist with that docket as a retired judge, as needed. During her tenure as a full-time judge she also often presided in the Criminal Division, and has significant experience in managing serious criminal cases involving defendants with complex mental health related issues.

SIM Exercise Representatives Hon. Michael Kainen



Judge Michael Kainen was appointed to the Vermont Superior Court by Governor Shumlin in January 2016. Prior to his appointment, he served as the Windsor County State's Attorney from 2013 to 2016 and as Deputy State's Attorney for Orange County from 2011 to 2013.

Judge Kainen received his Bachelor of Arts in history from University of Connecticut in 1988 and his

JD and MSL from Vermont Law School in 1992. He practiced law as a criminal defense and bankruptcy attorney from 1993 to 2007 and then in the firm of Hayes and Windish from 2009 to 2011 in a general civil litigation firm. He also served as the Director of the Vermont Sentencing Commission from 2007 to 2009.

Judge Kainen served as a member of Vermont House of Representatives from 1999 to 2006, where he served on the House Judiciary Committee as a ranking member, Chair of the Joint Committee on Judicial Rules, Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Judicial Retention and a member of Governor Douglas's criminal justice cabinet.

Judge Kainen was previously the Town Moderator for the Town of Hartford and also served on the Town's Housing Authority.

Judge Kainen currently serves as Judge of the criminal and family divisions in Caledonia and Essex.

Kelsey Stavseth, Executive Director NEKHS



Kelsey's passion lies in creating strong communities through an organizational development approach and leads through his community curiosity and generosity values. He believes leveraging existing assets and strengths is the best way to positively impact individuals, teams, and communities. Kelsey has an MBA with a focus in Positive Organizational Development and experience working throughout the Vermont Mental Health, Substance Use, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities system of care with previous experience at Howard Center and Lund. Kelsey is most energized when engaging people in meaningful dialogue around giving and receiving feedback and answering the question, "How do we know anyone is better off?". When he is not working at NKHS, Kelsey volunteers on boards and loves spending time outdoors with his family and exploring the natural beauty of the NEK, especially on bikes.

***NW Regional SIM Exercise Representative Greg Stefanski,
Director, Lamoille Health Collaborative***



Greg Stefanski works for Lamoille Health Partners as the Director of the Lamoille Health Collaborative, a partnership of 12 health and human service organizations in the Lamoille Valley. He works with local teams to address system challenges in the areas of mental health and substance use, complex pregnancy, suicide prevention, housing, health equity, flood response and Covid response. Prior to his current role, Greg worked for Capstone Community Action, the Lamoille Restorative Center, the North Central Vermont Recovery Center, Laraway Youth & Family Services and has taught courses at the Community College of Vermont and Vermont State University- Johnson. Greg lives in Burlington and is the proud father of three amazing, adult children.

***Melinda White, Recovery Coach Supervisor, Northwestern
Medical Center ER***



Melinda White is a woman in long-term recovery. She is known for hosting and producing “Recovery Rock Star”, a TV show aired through Northwest Access TV. She is a Turning Point Recovery Coach Supervisor in the Emergency Department and VT Blueprint MAT Lead. She also serves on the board of directors for Vermont Alliance for Recovery Residences (VTARR) and the St. Albans Police Advisory Board as Vice-Chair. Her passion for helping the community’s most vulnerable people is what keeps her committed to volunteer and service work, as well as strengthening her personal recovery. With a heart for people and families struggling with addiction, Melinda’s goal in life is to be of maximum service to God and her fellows.

Topic Two – Peer Support Strategies



Superior Court Judge John Pacht

John Pacht has served as a Vermont Superior Court Judge since being appointed to the bench in 2016 by former Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin. He currently sits in the Chittenden Criminal Division in Burlington. Judge Pacht received a bachelor’s degree from Antioch College and a juris doctor degree from the Hofstra University, Maurice A. Deane School of Law.

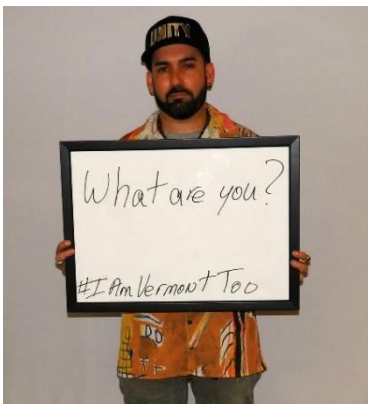
State Representative Daisy Berbeco; Pathways



DAISY BERBECO grew up in a small fishing community off the road system in coastal Alaska, where she developed a deep appreciation for the importance of human connection in building community wellness. Daisy is an expert in mental health and substance use policy and practice improvement. She has worked with thought leaders in trauma-informed care, peer recovery groups, health care management, leadership, and care integration. After studying international development at Sussex, Daisy worked in global health and the nonprofit sector in various locations including India and Vanuatu. She then spent seven years at the National Council for Mental Wellbeing in Washington D.C. before moving to Winooski in 2019. Prior to her election as a state representative in the Vermont General Assembly, Daisy served as the Senior Advisor for Mental Health Policy at the Vermont Department of Mental Health, the Secretary for the Finance & Policy Division for the National Association of Mental Health Program Directors, a member of Vermont's Substance Misuse Prevention and Oversight Council, and the Vermont Suicide Prevention Coalition. She is currently on the advisory board of the Hopi Foundation's peer-run Substance Use Prevention Center and a member of the Vermont Judiciary Commission on Mental Health and the Courts, the Agency of Human Services Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Steering Committee, an Executive Board Member of Urban Institute's Vermont Prison Reform and Innovation Network and the Conference of Chief Justices State Court Administrators Behavioral Health Committee Funding Workgroup. She is also the Chair of the Winooski Democrats and a Justice of the Peace. In her free time Daisy enjoys volunteering in her community and with NAMI Vermont, fishing, hiking, gardening, and painting. Member of the House of Representatives: 2023 – present.

Katie Bourque and Pathways Training Coordinator

Alexander Ferguson



Alexander is a father, educator, and advocate. He has worked for Pathways Vermont since 2013. Previous positions at Pathways include serving as the Team Lead at the Pathways Community Center & Team Lead of Pathways Support Line. Alexander is currently a Training Specialist working within Vermont's Peer Workforce Development Initiative and Pathways Vermont's Training Institute, providing peer support-focused training to community partners, and internally at Pathways. He develops and facilitates various trainings, including Intentional Peer Support, Harm Reduction, Relationship-First Approach to Extreme States, and Decolonizing Conversations About Death and Suicide. He also is the Board Chair of the Richard Kemp Center, which expands programs and services that support Black Vermonters' wellness, preserve their culture, support their youth, and advance racial equity and justice. Alexander firmly believes housing and healthcare are basic human rights that should be equally guaranteed to all without bias or judgment.



Peer Mentor Mac Parker

Born on a farm in North Danville, Vermont, Mac has been a farmer, a teacher, a carpenter, and a storyteller, among other trades. He also served 4 years as an inmate in Raybrook Federal Correctional Institution in New York State for his role raising funds for an ill-fated film project. He currently works as a Peer Mentor in the Beyond Bars program, helping others make the transition from prison back to the community.

***Washington County Mental Health Director,
Community Support Program Keith Grier***

Topic Three – Break-Out Sessions by SIM Region

Topic Four – Break-Out Feedback; Committee Reports

Justice Karen Carroll, moderator and Chair of Competency Evaluations and Related Issues Committee



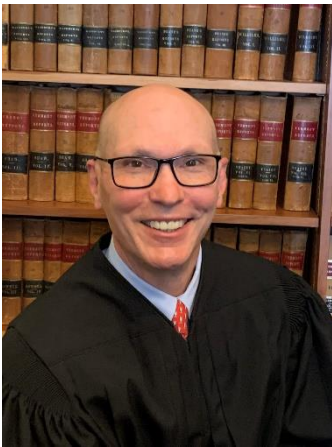
Justice Carroll, of Vernon, VT, was born in Newport, Vermont on February 7, 1963. She graduated from Proctor High School in 1981 and from Salve Regina College, cum laude, in 1985 with a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences Degree in Criminal Justice and English and French Literature. She earned her Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Vermont Law School in 1988. She was a Deputy State's Attorney in Windham County from September 1988 to June 1994, prosecuting serious felony cases and assigned as Chief Deputy State's Attorney for most of that time. In 1994, she began work with the Vermont Attorney General's Office, as the prosecutor for the Southern Vermont Drug Task Force. During this time, she was also cross-designated as a Special Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Vermont and prosecuted serious drug cases in the U.S. District Court. In December 2000, she was appointed a Superior Court Judge by Governor Howard Dean and has presided in the Family, Criminal and Civil Divisions of the Superiors Courts in Windham, Windsor and Bennington counties. Justice Carroll is a member of the American Law Institute and is former Chair of the state Board of Continuing Legal Education and Vermont Judiciary Criminal Division Oversight Committee. She is married to Richard C. Carroll, a partner in the law firm of Philips Dunn Shriver & Carroll in Brattleboro. They have three children.

On April 26, 2017, she was sworn in as an Associate Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court by Governor Phil Scott.

Peer Support Committee Chair, Hon. John Pacht

(see above)

Mental Illness Training Committee, Hon. Thomas Zonay



Judge Thomas A. Zonay is the Chief Superior Judge for the State of Vermont. He was appointed to the bench by Governor James Douglas in 2007 and appointed as Chief Superior Judge in 2021. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was an attorney in private practice and before that he was a police officer in Woodstock, VT. Judge Zonay received a bachelor's degree in food industry from Delaware Valley College and a Juris Doctor from Vermont Law School. He is the Chair of the Vermont Sentencing Commission and the Coordinated Justice Reform Council. He is the past-chair of the Vermont Public Access to Court Records Committee, the Vermont Judicial Education Committee, the Vermont Criminal Rules Committee, has served as a member of the Vermont Judicial Conduct Board, and the Vermont Judiciary Advisory Council (chair of budget committee). He has served on the Vermont Bar Association Board of Managers (President, 2005); was a director of the Vermont Bar Foundation; and is a past president of the New England Bar Association. At the time of his appointment to the bench, Judge Zonay was chairman of the Vermont Human Rights Commission and had previously served on other judicial and community boards and committees. He is also a U.S.C.G. licensed Master Captain. Judge Zonay is an alumnus of The National Judicial College, joined its faculty in 2012, and is the Immediate past chair of its Faculty Council.