

COURT-CLERGY CONFERENCE 2019

Topic: Substance Abuse-Best Practices

**Speaker(s): Hon. Desirée Bruce-Lyle, Judge
Deputy District Attorney Harrison Kennedy
Deputy Public Defender Ann Sommers**

What are three main points that the clergy should know about this subject?

- The Criminal Justice System approach to substance abuse is through collaborative courts. Participants receive substance use disorder treatment based on standardized assessment of their treatment needs including objective eligibility and exclusion criteria. Sanctions and therapeutic interventions are administered based on a substantial body of research. Cases are monitored by a treatment team and the court.
- Participants in substance abuse treatment courts are on probation and as a condition of probation are expected to comply with the rules of the respective programs. If they do not, they can be sanctioned in a variety of ways including with jail time or terminated and sentenced, potentially to a prison term.
- Participants are always represented by the public defender's office. The best way to find out how to assist the congregant and/or how to communicate with the court is to contact the lawyer (see below).

What are three ways in which clergy can help their congregants?

- Communicate with the Court by writing a letter.
- Make information available to congregants - direct them to community resources (e.g., non-profits, 12 step programs, church ministries).
- Encourage congregants to address substance abuse issues.

Three websites where clergy can go to learn more:

- San Diego Superior Court website: www.sdcourt.ca.gov
- National Association of Drug Court Professionals: www.nadcp.org
- Alcoholics Anonymous: aa.org/Narcotics Anonymous: na.org

Contact names, phone numbers and email addresses if clergy have questions:

- 211 Hot Line - As a local non-profit operating 24 hours a day, 365 days each year, 211 San Diego is a source for access to community, health, social and disaster services. By dialing 211 the call is free, confidential and available in more than 200 languages. 211 provides access to 6,000 services, resources and programs through an online database.
- Public Defender's Office: (619) 338-4700 reception