
Volume 64

Issue 3 Spring 2015: *Twenty-Fourth Annual DePaul
Law Review Symposium - Building the Solution:
Connecting the Pieces of of Mental Health Law to
Improve Mental Health Services*

Article 2

Introduction

Jenna Moran
moranjg2@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/law-review>

Recommended Citation

Jenna Moran, *Introduction*, 64 DePaul L. Rev. (2015)
Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/law-review/vol64/iss3/2>

This Front Matter is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Law at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in DePaul Law Review by an authorized editor of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact wsulliv6@depaul.edu, c.mcclure@depaul.edu.

**BUILDING THE SOLUTION: CONNECTING THE
PIECES OF MENTAL HEALTH LAW
TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

*Jenna Moran**

Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

—Henry Ford

It is estimated that one in four adults in America experiences mental illness in a given year. Gone are the days when mental health issues were considered taboo and isolated; today, a new era of heightened awareness and a movement to understand and solve the issues plaguing the perception of mental health is the norm. The legal system has not always been supportive of those facing mental health issues; however, those that advocate for a shift in the law are fearlessly pioneering the way to reform. The common goal of those advocates is working *together* to understand the issues to improve mental health services.

The Twenty-Fourth Annual DePaul Law Review Symposium, *Building the Solution: Connecting the Pieces of Mental Health Law to Improve Mental Health Services*, sought to bring together the foremost professionals in the field of mental health law. These individuals are continuously striving to improve the mental health system as a whole. Academics, practicing attorneys, judges, psychiatrists, and others gathered at the day-long symposium to discuss the issues and to propose solutions concerning a multitude of areas within mental health law. A wide array of topics was covered, including the criminal justice system, involuntary commitment, confidentiality laws, and integrated health services. During the lunch session, many of the speakers joined a panel that “connected the pieces” of their respective areas of expertise to build a solution.

Professor Mark J. Heyrman of the University of Chicago Law School served as the featured speaker. Professor Heyrman is a renowned advocate for improving mental health services and is actively

* J.D., DePaul University College of Law 2014; B.A., Miami University of Ohio 2009. The author, Symposium Editor of Volume 63 of the *DePaul Law Review*, is currently an attorney at Dinsmore & Shohl LLP in Cincinnati, Ohio.

involved within the mental health community. He candidly explained why the mental health system is broken—mental health services are underfunded and advocates are divided on solutions. The answer, in his opinion, is to focus energy on issues that unite mental health advocates. This primarily includes increasing mental health funding. Dr. Heyrman concluded his address by providing effective strategies for engaging people with mental illnesses and for creating untapped funding streams to assist in the development of these strategies.

Psychologist Dr. Melvin Hinton presented on challenges in the criminal justice system for offenders with mental illnesses as well as spoke on the lunch panel. In his Essay, *The Interface of Mental Health Needs and the Realities of the Correctional System*, Dr. Hinton—along with Dr. Shane Reister—discuss the importance of the effective delivery of mental health services to incarcerated offenders with mental illnesses. Specifically, the Essay addresses the policies and procedures that must be in place for an effective mental health service delivery system to thrive. Specifically, Dr. Hinton and Dr. Reister highlight the importance of an individualized and flexible delivery system in an effective mental health service delivery system in correctional facilities. Dr. Hinton and Dr. Reister maintain that the initial mental health screening is a crucial means for flagging potential mental health issues; however, timely communication of mental health concerns is paramount. Further, Dr. Hinton and Dr. Reister point out that an effective Quality Assurance process is an essential aspect to improve clinical processes. In conclusion, Dr. Hinton and Dr. Reister stress the impact the mental health population has on the entire correctional system.

I would like to thank all of our speakers and moderators who contributed to the Twenty-Fourth Annual Symposium: Featured Speaker Mark Heyrman (University of Chicago Law School); Judge Paul Biebel (Chief of Criminal Courts); Dr. Anderson Freeman (Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health); Dr. Melvin Hinton (Illinois Department of Corrections); James Carpenter (Pioneer Center for Human Services); Jan Brakel (DePaul University College of Law); Dr. Daniel Yohanna (University of Chicago Medicine); Rob Connor (Illinois Department of Human Services); Joseph Monahan (Monahan Law Group, LLC); Elizabeth LaRocca (Governor's Office of Health Innovation and Transformation); Kerri McBride (Illinois Health Information Exchange Authority); Bruce Ottley (DePaul University College of Law); Ben Wolf (American Civil Liberties Union); Mark Ishaug (Thresholds); David Jose (Plews Shadley Racher & Braun); Robert Mendonsa (Illinois Department of

Healthcare and Family Services); Dr. Freeman Farrow (DePaul University College of Law); and Dr. Michael Fogel (The Chicago School of Professional Psychology). The mental health advocacy of these dedicated professionals does not go unnoticed and I thank them for joining together at the Symposium to build an effective solution. I would also like to thank the DePaul Law Review for putting this Issue together and DePaul University for making the event such a success.

