



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

John Nevin, Communications Director

Ph: 517-373-0129 Twitter: @MISupremeCourt FB: facebook.com/misupremecourt

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Judges to Take Part in Regional Opioid Education Program

LANSING, MI, September 25, 2020 – Eleven judges from Michigan will be taking part in a new program called “Project ECHO” to help them better address opioid abuse in criminal and family court cases. An initiative of the Appalachian/Midwest Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative (RJOI), Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) provides education on issues including the physiology of addiction, evidence-based programming interventions, and medication-assisted treatment.

“Local judges are community leaders who are uniquely positioned to make a difference on the front lines of the opioid epidemic,” said Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Bridget M. McCormack, who serves on the RJOI Leadership Committee. “Judges see case after case involving people struggling with drug abuse, and Project ECHO will help them better understand ways to address addiction and strengthen their engagement with the community.”

Michigan judges taking part:

- Judge Benjamin Bolser – Montmorency County Probate Court
- Judge Andre Borrello – 10th Circuit Court, Saginaw County
- Judge Elizabeth DiSanto – 27th District Court, Wyandotte
- Judge Kevin Elsenheimer – 13th Circuit Court, Grand Traverse County
- Judge Elian Fichtner – 70th District Court, Saginaw
- Judge Shannon Holmes – 36th District Court, Detroit
- Judge Gordon Hosbein – Berrien County Trial Court
- Judge Annemarie Lepore – 41A District Court, Sterling Heights
- Judge Lisa McCormick – 30th Circuit Court, Ingham County
- Judge Michael Pope – 32nd Circuit Court, Gogebic County
- Judge Cynthia Ward – 54A District Court, Lansing
- Judge Geno Salomone – 23rd District Court, Taylor (judicial panel member)
- Judge Susan Dobrich – Cass County Probate Court (judicial panel member)

Originally developed for health care professionals, the [Project ECHO](#) model has expanded to help address needs in many other areas, including the judiciary. The Project ECHO pilot consists of a series of Zoom calls during which physicians will present information to the judges and answer their questions about opioids, addiction, evidence-based programs, and medication for opioid use disorder. Judges will take part in group discussions on how opioids affect individuals they encounter in their courtrooms and develop strategies to assist and manage these situations.

Organized by the National Center for State Courts, the [RJOI](#) was formed in 2016 in response to the need for information, education, and resources to address the opioid epidemic. The eight RJOI states are Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia.

Find Opioid Resources for Michigan Courts at www.courts.mi.gov/opioids.

–MSC–