



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

## MEDIA ADVISORY

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**Supreme Court, Veterans Administration to Host First Statewide Veterans' Task Force Meeting**  
**Creation of Veterans' Courts a Priority**

**HARRISBURG, PA, February 2, 2010** — On Wednesday, February 3, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court will partner with the U. S. Veterans Administration to host the first Veterans' Task Force Meeting to coordinate efforts among state courts, the Department of Veterans Affairs and criminal justice agencies to assist veterans who are struggling with substance abuse or mental health problems and who come into contact with the criminal justice system. Media coverage is invited. Still photography of the meeting is permitted **only without the use of a flash**.

The task force will be co-chaired by Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Seamus P. McCaffery—a retired United States Air Force colonel, former U. S. Marine and Philadelphia police officer—and Director Michael E. Moreland, Veterans Integrated Services Network for Pennsylvania, Delaware and portions of West Virginia and Ohio. Additional taskforce members include congressmen, state legislators and representatives from State Department of Corrections, Pennsylvania State Police, State Probation and Parole Board, Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the County Commissioners Association, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association and Pennsylvania Association of Drug Court Professionals. (*see the attached document for a complete list of task force members and for the meeting's agenda*).

Justice McCaffery said, “The wounds of war are not always visible. They are often invisible, manifesting themselves months or even years later causing many veterans to turn to drugs and alcohol in attempts to self-medicate. This often leads to unlawful behavior and/or sudden outbursts of violence, preventing some veterans from successfully reentering our communities.”

The task force plans to meet bi-annually, initially focusing on creating “veterans’ courts” to assist veterans involved in the criminal courts. “With a focus on resource coordination and guided rehabilitation,” Justice McCaffery said, “veterans’ courts offer a chance for the veteran to conquer problems and get his or her life back on track.”

Currently Pennsylvania has veterans’ courts in Allegheny, Lackawanna and Philadelphia. Problem-solving or specialty courts such as DUI, drug and veterans’ courts also help curb overall costs by serving as alternatives to costly taxpayer-funded incarceration, directing eligible, non-violent defendants into treatment programs. Defendants in these programs receive intense supervision from probation officers and are required to appear at frequent intervals before a judge.

-more-

According to the Pennsylvania State Data Center, there were approximately one million veterans in the state in 2007. Allegheny County has the largest population, with 142,638, followed by Philadelphia with 123,365 and Montgomery County with 70,232.

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***EDITORS' NOTES:*** *State Supreme Court Justice McCaffery and Director Michael E. Moreland, will be available for comment immediately following the conclusion task force meeting at approximately 2 p.m. The Administrative Office of Pennsylvania's Court's Judicial Programs Department is guiding, assisting and evaluating these specialty courts by establishing performance measures and gathering data to test those measures.*

February 3, 2010

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Position</b>
Justice McCaffery	Supreme Court	
Michael Moreland	VISN 4	
Karen Blackburn	AOPC	
Dr. Patty Griffin	Consultant	
Lovetta Ford	VA	
<i>Criminal Justice</i>		
Beard, Jeffery	DOC	Secretary
Cunningham, Judge	PADCP – Erie County	President
Engle, Michael	Pa Assoc Crim Def Lawyers	President
Hill, Douglas	Co Commissioners	Executive Director
McVey, Catherine	Probation & Parole	Chair
Neifield, Judge Marsha	Philadelphia MC Court	
Pawlowski, Colonel Frank	Commissioner, PSP	Capt. Wagonner for Commissioner
Piecuch, Michael	DA's Association	Executive Director
Zatolla, Judge John	Allegheny County	
Childs, Jim	President	President, Police Chiefs Assoc
<i>Legislators</i>		
Caltagirone, Thomas R.		
Holden, Congressman Tim	Schuykill	
Melio, Representative Tony	Bucks	
Murphy, Congressman Patrick	Bucks	Mike Brown for Congressman
Murphy, Congressman Tim	Allegheny	
Murtha, Congressman John	W. Pennsylvania	
Rafferty, Senator John	Montgomery	
Stack, Senator Michael	Philadelphia	
White, Senator Don	Indiana	
Drucker, Representative Paul	157th District	
<i>Veterans/VA</i>		
Adelman, Michael	Erie VA	
Bennett, Tony	Altoona VA	
Boss, Janice	Wilkes-Barre VA	
Callahan, Robert	Lebanon VA	
Citron, Richard	Philadelphia VA	
Devansky, Gary	Coatesville VA	
Nealon, Patricia	Butler VA	
Wolf, Terry Gerigk	Pittsburgh VA	
Lastowska, Thomas	VBA Philadelphia	
McCoy, Beth	VBA Pittsburgh	
Wagner, Brigadier General Scott	PA Dept Vet Affairs	

VETERANS AND PENNSYLVANIA'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM  
Task Force Meeting

February 3, 2010  
10 AM to 2 PM

*Agenda*

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10:00-10:20	Introductions	
10:20-10:45	How we got here!	Justice McCaffery Director Moreland
10:45	Introduction of Dr. Griffin	Karen Blackburn
10:45-12:00	Use of the Sequential Intercept Model for Veterans	Dr. Patricia Griffin
12:00-12:45	Lunch Judicial Center	
12:45	Introduction	Karen Blackburn
12:45-1:45	VA 101	Director Moreland Lovetta Ford
1:45-2:00	Where do we go from here?	Justice McCaffery Director Moreland