

Lawyers and Judges Assistance Committee

Fiscal Year 2021

Jurisdiction: Propose and support measures to advance the well-being of lawyers, judges, and law students by:

- Recommending, developing, and supporting programs and educational presentations that provide assistance to law students, lawyers, and judges regarding substance use issues, mental health issues, anxiety, and general wellness
- Reviewing and making recommendations concerning proposed statutes and court rules affecting assistance to lawyers and judges faced with personal and professional problems related to substance use and mental health issues
- Monitoring national trends and data on attorney and judge wellness and treatment
- Determining how the committee’s work might interact with and support work of the Professional Ethics, Judicial Ethics, Character and Fitness, and Client Protection Fund committees, including by conferring and coordinating regularly with them on trends, data, insights, and metrics
- Being aware of and discussing metrics measuring the effectiveness of national and state efforts to reduce attorney drug and alcohol addiction and depression
- Reviewing and evaluating metrics measuring

Note: The LJAP Committee may develop and carry out programming consistent with this jurisdiction and within allocated budgetary resources, without explicit approval by the Board of Commissioners or Professional Standards Committee. This committee may have more than 15 members and may include non-State Bar members.

Time Frame	Strategic Plan Goal/Strategy	Description of Activity
FY 2020-2021	3.2	Discussed, voted on, composed, and provided response to Board of Commissioners supporting proposed amendment of MCR 9.261 (ADM File No. 2020-16). The proposed amendment, considered by the Michigan Supreme Court, related to the enabling of the sharing of information from the Judicial Tenure Commission to LJAP as well as to the Judicial Qualifications Committee. LJAC supported this proposed amendment as did other pertinent SBM committees.
	1.1	Discussed, composed, and provided written comments regarding the proposed revisions to Standards 303 and 508 and Rules 2 and 13 of the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools. LJAP supported Standard 508’s new proposed requirement that law schools provide all their students with information on law student well-

		being resources, including information or services related to mental health and substance abuse.
	1.4	In conjunction with other SBM committees and SBM staff, garnered an understanding and facilitated promotion of the SOLACE program, including the recruitment of SOLACE program partners and individuals to join the SOLACE network. Individual LJAP members responded to requests for assistance, providing meaningful and compassionate support to members of Michigan's legal community.
	1.2	Expanded outreach to law schools, local and affinity bars, regulators, legal employers, and other stakeholders in the field of law related to law student and lawyer well-being. Much of this outreach was focused on coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, doubling outreach efforts from last year despite transitioning from face-to-face to virtual events.
	1.4	Facilitated promotion of LJAP's new weekly virtual support group, Lawyer Well-Being, now available to Michigan attorneys interested in connecting with other legal professionals as they explore stressors unique to the field of law and optimization of their overall wellness.
FY 2021-2022 Priorities	1.4	Facilitate growth and expand outreach of the SOLACE program, increasing those individuals and partner programs joining the SOLACE network, and assisting more members of Michigan's legal community in need.
	1.1	Aid in the establishment and promotion of a new law student virtual support group, offered to students from all five of Michigan's law schools, created to foster connection with peers who understand the unique stressors law students face. This group focuses on different aspects of law student well-being and addresses how students can thrive both personally and professionally.
	1.4	Expand outreach and increase awareness of LJAP's recently developed virtual support group, Lawyer Well-Being, offered to Michigan attorneys interested in connecting with other legal professionals as they explore stressors unique to the field of law and optimization of their overall wellness.
	1.2	Expand outreach to law schools, local and affinity bars, regulators, legal employers, and other stakeholders in the field of law related to law student and lawyer well-being, focusing on how legal professionals in Michigan continue to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and how this may impact future thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and activities.
	1.4	Maintain awareness of both in-person and virtual 12-Step meetings specific to lawyers and judges. Facilitate the chairing of these meetings and keep LJAP staff apprised of any changes that take place with regard to date, time, location, or meeting format so that information can be updated and accurately noted on the LJAP website and in the Michigan Bar

		Journal and accessible to members of Michigan’s legal community.
Proposed Future Priorities	1.2	Support the efforts of the potential for a State Bar of Michigan and Michigan Supreme Court collaboration for a Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being.
	1.1	Continue to expand outreach efforts on law student well-being to all five of Michigan’s law schools, particularly as we transition from the COVID-19 pandemic to our “new normal.”
	1.2	Continue to expand outreach efforts on lawyer well-being to local and affinity bars, law firms, regulators, legal employers, and other stakeholders in the field of law with the goal of reaching more members than ever before.
	1.4	Continue promotion of LJAP’s two new Virtual Support Groups focusing on the well-being of the legal profession — one targeted at Michigan’s lawyers and the other targeting law students — helping legal professionals thrive both personally and professionally.
	3.1	Aid in efforts to support the Lawyers Wellness Foundation, an independent 501(c)(3) established to assist lawyers with mental health and/or substance use disorder diagnoses, who are experiencing financial hardship, obtain clinically appropriate treatment.

Recommended Committee Changes: No recommended changes.

Additional Comments: Members of the Lawyers and Judges Assistance Committee are highly passionate about the well-being of the legal profession. They act as emissaries for wellness and are ready and willing to support the efforts of the LJA Program.