



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

Contact:
Lucian Chalfen,
Public Information Director
Arlene Hackel, Deputy Director
(212) 428-2500

**Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge**

www.nycourts.gov/press

Date: May 5, 2022

New Working Group to Examine New York State Courts' Pandemic-Related Practices, Propose Post-Pandemic Steps *Working Group Will Hold Public Hearings to Elicit Input on Moving Forward*

NEW YORK—Chief Judge Janet DiFiore today announced the formation of the Pandemic Practices Working Group, which will hold a series of public hearings around the state over the coming months to examine the Court System's response to COVID-19, consider post-pandemic procedures and determine which policies should be kept at the ready if court operations are again interrupted due to an unforeseeable event. The working group is the latest offshoot of the Commission to Reimagine the Future of New York's Courts, a panel of judges, lawyers, academics and technology experts appointed by Judge DiFiore in 2020 to examine technological and other innovations and make recommendations to facilitate the delivery of justice services and keep up with society's rapidly evolving changes. Since its inception, the Commission has issued several reports that include innovative proposals.

The new Pandemic Practices Working Group, to be led by Supreme Court Justice Craig J. Doran of the Seventh Judicial District, will conduct a thorough review of pandemic policies implemented by the New York State courts as well as other jurisdictions. The working group will hold its first public hearing on **Tuesday, June 7, 2022** at Court of

Appeals Hall in Albany, eliciting input from the bench and bar, community leaders and others. Based on its research and the input from the public hearings, the group will release a comprehensive report with its findings and recommendations.

“The pandemic presented, and continues to present, enormous challenges. However, with those challenges come opportunities to improve, via novel approaches, the delivery and quality of justice services,” said Chief Judge DiFiore. “I am grateful to the Commission’s chair, Hank Greenberg of Greenberg Traurig, and to its members for their critical guidance and contributions to date. I look forward to the findings and recommendations of Judge Doran, Hank Greenberg and the new working group members in effectively and efficiently steering the New York State courts into the future.”

“The Commission’s initial task was to help improve the efficiency and quality of justice services during the public health crisis and its aftermath. At first, it was triage: what can the courts do now and in the very near future to deal with the constantly shifting landscape of the pandemic? This new working group is part of the next wave, in which we reflect back on our actions since the pandemic’s onset, also thinking ahead, in preparing for future contingencies,” said Hank Greenberg.

“The Court System did not have the option of shutting down when the pandemic struck in March 2020. We had to pivot instantly, with no blueprint to guide us and no precedent to follow. Now, we have both the opportunity and obligation to look backward so that we may best move forward,” said Judge Doran.

For more information about the Pandemic Practices Working Group/to request an opportunity to provide testimony at the June 7th public hearing, please email:

PPWG@nycourts.gov.

Further information about the Commission and its work is available at:

<https://www.nycourts.gov/reimagine-the-future/mission.shtml>

A roster of the Pandemic Practices Working Group members follows.

Pandemic Practices Working Group

Chair

Hon. Craig J. Doran, Supreme Court Justice, Seventh Judicial District

Members (in alphabetical order)

Hon. Tamiko Amaker, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Management Support, Office of Court Administration

Nancy J. Barry, Chief of Operations, Office of Court Administration

Mark A. Berman, Partner, Ganfer Shore Leeds & Zauderer LLP

Jessica Cherry, Assistant Deputy Counsel, Office of Court Administration

Michael DeVito, Manager, Office of Record Production, Office of Court Administration

Hank M. Greenberg, Shareholder, Greenberg Traurig

Hon. Craig Hannah, Supervising Judge, Buffalo City Court

Adrienne Holder, Attorney in Charge-Civil Practice, The Legal Aid Society of NYC

Seymour W. James Jr., Partner, Barket Epstein Kearon Aldea & LoTurco, LLP

Melinda Katz, District Attorney, Queens County

Porter Kirkwood, District Executive, Sixth Judicial District

Roger Juan Maldonado, Partner, Smith Gambrell & Russell

Mary McQueen, President, National Center for State Courts

Hon. Edwina G. Mendelson, Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives, Office of Court Administration

Lillian M. Moy, Executive Director, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York

Hon. James P. Murphy, Administrative Judge, Fifth Judicial District

Carolyn G. Nussbaum, Partner, Nixon Peabody LLP

Lauren Sang-Hee Owens, Associate, Dreyer Boyajian LLP

Pandemic Practices Working Group Members/2

Shannon Pero, Justice, Town of Greece

Anthony R. Perri, Deputy Counsel, Office of Court Administration

Lisa Preston, Chief Clerk, Monroe County Supreme and County Courts

Hon. Stan L. Pritzker, Associate Justice, Appellate Division, Third Dept.

Scott B. Reents, Lead Attorney, Data Analytics and E-Discovery, Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP

William C. Silverman, Partner, Proskauer Rose LLP

Christine Sisario, Chief of Technology, Office of Court Administration

David Slayton, Vice President, Court Consulting, National Center for State Courts

Edward A. Steinberg, Partner, Leav & Steinberg, LLP

Mike Williams, Chief Clerk, Suffolk County Family Court

Oliver Young, Counsel, Barclay Damon, LLP

###