

HARRIS COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH ATTORNEY CERTIFICATION & TRAINING PROGRAM



A PROGRAM FOR PRIVATE
APPOINTED COUNSEL
SPONSORED BY THE



BENEFITS OF THE

MENTAL HEALTH ATTORNEY CERTIFICATION & TRAINING PROGRAM

Attorneys who complete the Mental Health Attorney Certification Program will:

- Be eligible to receive appointments to represent indigent mentally ill defendants charged with misdemeanors.
- In the future, will be eligible to receive appointments in district courts to represent mentally ill defendants charged with felonies.
- Receive free MCLE that can be applied to annual State Bar MCLE requirements.

Attorneys who don't want certification but would like to earn free MCLE are welcome to attend any of the trainings as well.

For more information contact:

Mental Health Liaison Person

**Harris County
Public Defender's Office**

Phone | 713.368.0016
Fax | 713.XXX.XXXX

www.harriscountypublicdefender.org/mh

TRAINING TOPICS

Approximately once a month, free MCLE will be provided on such topics as:

- Diagnostic Terminology Related to Mental Illness
- Common Psychoactive Medications and Their Use
- Competency and Tex. Code Crim. Proc. art. 46B
- Standards of Evidence Relating to Competency
- Evaluating Competency Examinations
- Cross-Examination of Mental Health Experts
- Civil Commitment in Texas
- Forced Medication Proceedings
- Not Guilty By Reason of Insanity
- Landmark Cases in Mental Health Law
- Attitudinal Issues in Representing the Mentally Ill

Attendance for MCLE trainings will be required of persons seeking Mental Health Attorney Certification in order to accept appointments to represent mentally ill defendants.

Persons not seeking certification are welcome to attend any MCLE presentations of interest.



LAW



SKILLS

SCIENCE



MEDICINE



Program Requirements

- Submit an application to join the certification program. DUE Month xx, 2014.
- Attend 12 monthly MCLE programs lasting 1-to-1.5 hours each.
- Pass a written test.

WANT TO HELP IMPROVE REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENT MENTALLY ILL DEFENDANTS IN HARRIS COUNTY?

Join Us – And Make a Difference.

The Harris County Jail is the largest mental health facility in the state of Texas. Approximately 25 percent of inmates in the jail are on some form of psychotropic medication. It's a complex problem that requires a multi-faceted solution.

One way in which Harris County is seeking to reduce the number of mentally ill persons in the jail is by ensuring that defense counsel representing these defendants is well-qualified.

The County recently received a grant from the Texas Indigent Defense Commission to establish a Mental Health Attorney Certification Program.

The program is designed to improve the representation of indigent mentally ill defendants by providing criminal defense attorneys with the legal knowledge and skills they need to represent these clients with special needs.

Who Should Get Certified?

Harris County's Criminal Courts at Law will soon require indigent defendants with mental illness to be represented by an attorney who has successfully completed this Mental Health Attorney Certification Program. The District Courts are considering doing the same thing.

We are looking for candidates who are:

- Criminal defense attorneys who are qualified to accept appointments in county courts for misdemeanors and who are interested in representing indigent mentally ill defendants should get certified.
- Attorneys who are qualified to accept appointments in district courts and who are interested in representing indigent mentally ill defendants charged with felonies.