

Early Identification of People with Mental Illness or IDD

Speakers

Judge Yolanda Huff presides over County Court 12 and the Mental Health Court in San Antonio, Texas. Before running for judge in 2018, Huff was a solo practitioner in Bexar County for 22 years and handled criminal, Child Protective Services (CPS) and personal injury cases. Judge Huff also serves on the Bexar County Domestic Violence Committee and the Bexar County 16.22 Progress Committee. One of Judge Huff's greatest accomplishments since taking the bench has been the founding of the Bexar County Specialty Courts Coalition. Judge Huff is Chair of the Coalition, which educates the community about Specialty Courts.

Hon. Yolanda Huff



Hon. Grace Uzomba



Judge Grace M. Uzomba is the Presiding Judge of Bexar County Court at Law No. 2. This court handles a variety of misdemeanor criminal cases as well as hearing civil cases with jurisdiction up to \$250,000. Judge Uzomba is a 20-year retired military veteran. She attended St. Mary's University School of Law after she retired from Fort Sam Houston in 2001. A current member of the National Association of Drug Courts Professional (NADCP) now known as RISE; Judge Uzomba immediately saw the benefits of Specialty Courts that dealt with the root causes of criminal behavior, alcohol/drugs abuse or addictions, mental illnesses, intellectual development disability and/ or trauma or dual occurring issues.

Gilbert Gonzales currently serves as Director of the Bexar County Department of Behavioral Health. Gonzales has more than 30 years of experience in the field of substance abuse and mental health, crisis prevention and in treatment provision as a clinician, university faculty, project/program director and policy advisor. Throughout his career, he has led strategic planning, treatment and policy development, and training. He has also led systems to change initiatives that help mental health and substance abuse service providers promote collaboration and build service capacity in support of diverse populations.

Gilbert Gonzales



Jonathan Lemuel



Jonathan Lemuel is the Director of Jail Diversion at Bluebonnet Trails Community Services (BTCS) and has worked for this organization for 17 years. BTCS serves as the Local Mental Health Authority for eight central Texas counties: Bastrop, Burnet, Caldwell, Fayette, Gonzales, Guadalupe, Lee and Williamson. Lemuel's primary responsibilities include liaising between BTCS and local jails by facilitating the discharge of inmates whose offenses are a direct result of mental health symptoms. Lemuel provides training for Law Enforcement Jailers and Local Bar Associations. In addition to these tasks, he oversees and facilitates continuity of care for BTCS patients at State Hospitals, coordinating aftercare once a person is released from the hospital.

Before joining the Judicial Commission for Mental Health as a staff attorney in 2020, Kama Harris worked as a criminal defense lawyer, defending hundreds of adult and juvenile clients at all levels of the Texas criminal justice system. She began her legal career at a public defender's office, working as a mitigation specialist for death penalty cases. In that role, she gained instrumental insight on the way trauma, poverty, racism, mental health, and intellectual and developmental disabilities had an impact on her clients, their families, the community, and the legal system. Ms. Harris utilized that knowledge during her time as the First Assistant Public Defender in Burnet County, as an attorney in private practice, and now as a staff attorney with the JCMH.

*Kama Harris,
Moderator*



Summary



Article 16.22 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure details a procedure for identifying a person's possible Mental Illness or Intellectual disability at the earliest stages of—and throughout—a criminal proceeding. Senate Bill 49 from the 2021 legislative session amended CCP art. 16.22 to expand who is entitled to receive the 16.22 report. In addition to defense counsel, the prosecuting attorney, the trial court, the legislative amendment now includes the personal bond office or director of pretrial supervision department as well as the sheriff, or other person responsible for the defendant's medical records while they are in county jail. Now that pretrial departments will be receiving numerous 16.22 reports for their pretrial supervision clients, it is imperative that officers, as well as attorneys, court, and jail staff understand how to read and interpret the 16.22 report and how to use the reports to support pretrial clients. Moderated panel discussing 16.22, and presentation will cover:

- Breaking down the 16.22 report and (how to read and interpret)
- What the courts and attorneys can do with the 16.22 report
- Pre-Trial Services and the 16.22