

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT MEETING
SENATE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 26, 2003

2:23 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

SENATE JUDICIARY

Senator Ralph Seekins, Chair
Senator Scott Ogan, Vice Chair
Senator Gene Therriault
Senator Hollis French

HOUSE JUDICIARY

Representative Lesil McGuire, Chair
Representative Tom Anderson, Vice Chair
Representative Jim Holm
Representative John Coghill
Representative Ralph Samuels
Representative Les Gara
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

SENATE JUDICIARY

Senator Johnny Ellis

HOUSE JUDICIARY

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS:

Judicial Council - Bill Gordon;
Violent Crimes Compensation Board - LeRoy Barker, Gerad G.
Godfrey

CONFIRMATIONS POSTPONED

OVERVIEW: PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS, THERAPEUTIC/WELLNESS COURTS,
ELECTRONIC MONITORING FOR ALCOHOL RELATED OFFENDERS

TAPES

03-05, SIDE A [SENATE JUD TAPE]

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

CHAIR RALPH SEEKINS convened the joint meeting of the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee and the House Judiciary Standing Committee at 2:23 p.m. Present at the call to order from the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee were Senator French, Senator Therriault and Chair Seekins. Senator Ogan arrived shortly thereafter. Chair Seekins turned the gavel over to Chair Lesil McGuire of the House Judiciary Standing Committee to chair the meeting.

CHAIR LESIL MCGUIRE introduced the House Judiciary Standing Committee members present at the call to order. Present were Representative Samuels, Representative Coghill and Chair McGuire. Representative Gruenberg, Representative Holm Representative Anderson and Representative Gara arrived shortly thereafter. The agenda had been amended and the business before the committee was an overview on Partners for Progress, Therapeutic/Wellness Courts, and Electronic Monitoring for Alcohol Related Offenders.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

MS. JANET McCABE, Board Chair, Partners for Progress, Ms. Robyn Johnson, Executive Director, Partners for Progress, and Ms. Jill McLeod, Attorney and Coordinator, Center for Therapeutic Justice, presented an overview.

MS. JANET McCABE informed committee members Partners for Progress is the non-profit corporation that works with the Anchorage Wellness Court to provide community based services. Partners for Progress also works with other communities interested in starting programs that deal with repeat alcoholic offenders. Legislative support has made the program possible; it has had great success at both the felony and misdemeanor levels. Last year legislation passed that increased the effectiveness of the Wellness and Therapeutic Courts and a resolution in support of the house arrest program in combination with treatment programs to reduce the costs of incarceration.

MS. McLEOD explained Therapeutic Courts are special courts that handle cases involving alcohol and drug addicted offenders by

utilizing the coercive power of the court, extensive treatment and supervision. Therapeutic Courts have three primary goals:

- Reduce recidivism
- Lower substance abuse
- Rehabilitate participants

MS. McLEOD reviewed the history, support and cost effectiveness of therapeutic courts. She spoke of the greatly reduced cost and recidivism rate of offenders going through the Therapeutic Court programs nationwide. Alaska has seven therapeutic court programs. Approximately 80 percent of crimes in Alaska are associated with alcohol. The benefit of the Wellness Court is that it gets the alcohol out of the alcoholic.

JUDGE JAMES WANAMAKER, 3rd Judicial District Anchorage, explained the Wellness Court provides a complete program for getting offenders to sobriety and provides them with tools to maintain sobriety. Without the Wellness Courts, offenders usually serve jail time and receive no rehabilitation. The Anchorage Wellness Court Treatment Plan is as follows:

- Alcohol assessment
- Enter treatment with an alcoholism counselor
- Take naltrexone, a medication that stops cravings for alcohol
- Appear frequently before the Wellness Court Judge for compliance hearings
- Attend a support group for people taking naltrexone
- Attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings
- Attend "Moral Recognition Therapy" (cognitive behavioral training addressing moral reasoning, decision making and faulty, irrational beliefs in addicts)
- Work/attend school
- Be monitored for continued sobriety
- Maintain sobriety for 18 months

JUDGE WANAMAKER informed committee members the Wellness Court is over capacity and looking to double capacity to 80 offenders. He discussed the Anchorage DUI (driving under the influence) felony courts.

MR. MIKE FOLEY, a graduate of the Wellness Court, explained his cravings for alcohol, the positive effect of naltrexone and his

experiences with the Wellness Court Treatment Plan. He has successfully maintained sobriety for the last three years.

Senate and House Judiciary Committee members asked questions of all the presenters regarding specifics of the courts, programs, naltrexone, recidivism rates, funding and statistics.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committees, the joint meeting between the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee and the House Judiciary Standing Committee was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded and handwritten log notes were taken. A copy of the tape(s) and log notes may be obtained by contacting the Senate Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2870. After adjournment of the second session of the 23rd Alaska State Legislature, this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.