

From: Chief Judge Sally Tarnowski
Date: April 14, 2020



Good afternoon!

I hope this finds you all well.

This past week, we expanded the hearings we were able to hold to include CHIPS cases, family motions, treatment courts and other hearings that did not involve contested testimonial matters. These were done on Virtual Meeting Room platforms or by telephone bridge lines. Overall we believe it was very successful.

Next week, we are going to try a new platform than what we have been using. Many of you are likely familiar with Zoom by now. The Branch has contracted with Zoom for secure accounts, and we believe this will be a good platform for holding hearings where the judge needs to see the party or defendant who is not in custody. We will start small with a few sentencings and adoptions and grow from there, based on our experiences in those matters.

Our plan is to begin hearing criminal matters involving defendants who are not in custody by the first week of May. The Judicial Branch has determined that we will hold no jury trials during at least the month of May, so we plan to work on backlogged cases during that time. Hopefully, we will have a plan to hold speedy jury trials in the month of June.

We will also be holding all hearing types that we have held up until this time. Again, all of these hearings will be done remotely; none of these expanded hearings will be done in courthouses. Appearing in person will not be an option.

Please forward this to other stakeholders, attorneys, bar associations, justice partners, employees, and others who would find it relevant. If you have questions, feel free to email me or call court administration.

Stay well.

Sally Tarnowski