

From: Chief Judge Sally Tarnowski

Date: April 7, 2020



Good morning!

As you know, for the past few weeks, we have held only those hearings involving liberty and public safety in criminal, juvenile, civil commitment and child protection matters. We have held these hearings, in most cases, through remote platforms allowing parties and attorneys to join either by computer or by telephone. In most cases, the judge, court reporter, and court staff have also appeared remotely. This has given us the opportunity not only to test technology but also to learn and become more adept at using the platforms.

We are now ready to expand the hearings we will be able to do. Next week, the week of April 13, we will begin holding hearings that do not involve testimony and do not involve criminal defendants. We will also hold treatment courts. 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.

Therefore, if you have a non-criminal matter set for next week, your hearing is on unless you hear differently from us. If you have an evidentiary hearing or court trial, we will change it to a pretrial or status conference by telephone with the judge to discuss moving forward. If there is some other hearing type (adoptions, name changes, for example) that requires testimony, it will be reset.

If you have CHIPS cases, they will be heard with the exception of trials. I understand, however, that some calendars have stacked hearings (2 or 3 cases set at the same time). We will have to reset some of these as having folks wait is not an option when we hold hearings remotely. We are also moving Intermediate Disposition Hearings that have at least 30 days before their 90 review deadline, but will keep them on the calendar if the recommendation is for something other than status quo or any party has a reason for keeping the hearing as scheduled.

If you have family or civil motions, those will be heard.

At least 24 hours before your scheduled hearing, you will be sent notification of how you can appear at the hearing. The hearing may be held by phone or by video platform. If your client plans to appear, the court reporter will dial them in, so please email the judge's court reporter at least 24 hours in advance of the hearing with your client's phone number.

We are also working on a plan to continue to expand what we are able to do remotely. This will include matters requiring testimony and those criminal matters that have been delayed as well as upcoming, already-set criminal calendars. I will inform you of that once it is developed.

There will be bumps. As I have said before, this is new to all of us. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we all try to navigate this.

If you have questions, feel free to email me or call court administration. Also, as with all of my emails, please forward this to other stakeholders, attorneys, bar associations, justice partners, employees, and others who would find it relevant.

Stay well.

Sally Tarnowski