



MARICOPA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT: MENTAL HEALTH

Modified Mental Health Department Operations during COVID-19 Pandemic

Consistent with Arizona Supreme Court [Administrative Order No. 2021-109](#) issued on July 14, 2021, and Superior Court of Arizona for Maricopa County (the “Maricopa County Superior Court”) [Administrative Order No. 2021-103](#) as amended on July 20, 2021, the following apply to all hearings held pursuant to Chapter 5, Title 36, Arizona Revised Statutes:

- 1 All court-ordered evaluation and court-ordered treatment hearings**, including all court-ordered treatment renewal hearings, will continue to be conducted electronically unless otherwise ordered by the court in a particular case.
- 2 The patient, as well as all lawyers and witnesses**, must appear and testify electronically. At this point, Court Connect, which is based on the Microsoft Teams platform, will continue to be utilized for electronic appearances, but that technology is subject to change. Probate Court Administration or the assigned Judicial Officer’s division will continue to provide instructions as to how to parties, lawyers, and witnesses can participate electronically.
- 3 No motions for electronic appearance or testimony are required.**
- 4 If an electronic appearance is not feasible or the patient wishes to appear in person**, the court may continue the hearing as the current public health emergency constitutes “good cause” for avoiding in-person hearings at the present time. Initial court-ordered treatment and court-ordered evaluation hearings will be continued for the shortest time possible that will allow for the patient to appear in person. Renewal hearings may be continued for approximately 30 days.
- 5 If a party believes in-person testimony of a witness is necessary**, that party should make a motion to allow the in-person testimony. Such motion shall be addressed to the Judicial Officer assigned to the case and may be made either in writing or in open court. If the motion is made at the time originally set for the hearing and the motion is granted, the hearing may be continued until such time as in-person appearances do not create a health hazard. Any such continuance will be for as short a time as feasible
- 6 Requests for continuances and extensions of deadlines**, as well as requests for special accommodations for persons who are at a high risk of illness from COVID19 will be liberally granted.

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Presently:

- ▶ Commissioner Donnadiou is presiding over all court-ordered treatment hearings at the Valleywise Maryvale facility.
- ▶ Commissioner Bell is presiding over all court-ordered treatment hearings at the Valleywise Mesa facility.
- ▶ Commissioner Selzer is presiding over the Valleywise Psychiatric Annex/Arizona State Hospital calendar (including all COT renewal hearings).
- ▶ Commissioner Van Wie is ruling on all detention orders and similar paperwork relating to all patients, regardless of the patient's location. In addition, she is presiding over all court-ordered evaluation hearings and covering court-ordered treatment hearings at all facilities on an as-needed basis.

We thank the stakeholders for their continued patience and cooperation as we face the unprecedented challenges resulting from the COVID-19 public health emergency.

