

The Courthouse Steps

A NEWSLETTER FOR NEUTRALS WHO SERVE THE NEW HAMPSHIRE JUDICIAL BRANCH

June 1, 2022

Wednesday



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To preserve the rule of law and to protect the rights and liberties guaranteed by the US and NH Constitutions, the Court will provide accessible, prompt, and efficient forums for the fair and independent administration of justice, with respect for the dignity of all we serve

Legislation that May Impact Divorce/Parenting and Guardianship Mediation

Below are three bills that were signed into law last Friday that divorce/parenting mediators and guardianship mediators should be aware of. Please look into the effective date of the legislation.

- **HB 1118 (Determination of Parental Rights and Responsibilities Following the Death of a Child's Parent or Guardian):** "In cases where the court is addressing temporary or permanent parental rights and responsibilities due to either the death of a parent or the death of a guardian who has served in that capacity for the child for at least 2 years, the court shall consider, as part of its determination as to the best interests of a child, **the contact the child has had with the surviving parent and/or the wishes of the deceased guardian as provided in estate planning documents.**"
- **HB 1244 (Consent to Medical and Dental Treatment of Children in Schools):** "Participation in any school-based oral health program shall require explicit written consent of the child's parent or legal guardian."
- **HB 1303 (Relative to Causes for Absolute Divorce):** This bill revises the grounds for absolute divorce in the case of habitual drunkenness to include drug abuse.

Case Manager-Family Mediator Summit

Please save the date! The annual Case Manager-Mediator Summit will be held on **September 16, 2022** from 9am-3pm. The summit will be held **in-person**. We look forward to seeing you then.

TPR/VMA Scheduling

Judicial Training days are used by DCYF to train their attorneys. Please do not schedule VMA mediations on the below days:

- June 3, 2022
- September 23, 2022
- December 2, 2022

Notice for Non-Payment of Mediation (Divorce/Parenting)

A gentle reminder that the ADR Office does not cover the divorce/parenting mediation fee for a party who is considered private pay. If a mediator is unable to collect payment from a party who is private pay, the mediator may submit the Notice of Non-Payment of Mediator Fee (NHJB 2743), which can be found here:

(<https://www.courts.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt471/files/documents/2021-04/nhjb-2743-f.pdf>)

The Court should then raise the issue of non-payment with the non-paying party at the next regularly scheduled court hearing.

Updated Insurance for Divorce/Parenting Mediators

Divorce/Parenting mediators should submit updated professional liability insurance information to Patty Cole at pcole@courts.state.nh.us

Approaching End of Fiscal Year

As we approach the end of the fiscal year (6/30/22), please be aware that mediator payments may be stalled between mid-June and the first week of July. Mediators should turn in any outstanding invoices by June 10th to ensure payment is made timely.

Divorce/Parenting Mediators: Please send all mileage reimbursement documentation to the ADR Office by June 10th.