

ORDER OF APPOINTMENT

ALABAMA LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COMMITTEE 2011-2012

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Purpose and Scope

Members of the Lawyers Helping Lawyers Committee are volunteers who assist in the implementation of services provided by the Alabama Lawyer Assistant Program and serve active roles in the planning and developing of policies and procedures to assist ALAP in carrying out its' mission. Advisory Counsel members as well as active committee members also assist ALAP in providing immediate and confidential help to Alabama lawyers, judges and law students suffering from addictions and other types of mental health illnesses. The recognized concepts of intervention, peer support and accountability have proven effective in helping lawyers in need take the necessary steps toward recovery. The value and effectiveness of these techniques, carried out by other lawyers who are themselves in recovery or who have had personal experiences in dealing with these illnesses, is invaluable. Committee members also assist ALAP in providing educational programs to promote awareness about these issues.

1. Assure the highest Standards of Bar Admission, Professional Conduct, and Professional Competence and Service.

A) Bar Admissions

In keeping with the Bar's long term plan to ensure admission standards are current and consistent with the best practices nationally,

- 1) Members of the Admissions sub Committee will continue to review the manner in which addiction and other mental or emotional issues impact the character and fitness process.
- 2) Members of the ALAP Admissions sub-committee will continue reviewing alternatives to address and foster admission procedures. The urgency that surrounds Bar Exam deadlines and admission requirements impacts character and fitness decisions. The Admissions sub-committee

is reviewing other states admission procedures and will submit a report with recommendations.

- 3) Develop a training program for character and fitness committee panels to ensure panel members are educated about these issues and the various services ALAP provides.
- 4) Develop policies and procedures for admission referrals to foster consistency in how these referrals are made.
- 5) Initiating early positive relationships between future bar members and the association decreases anxiety in students and increases the likelihood of future involvement and service with the association. The ALAP director will continue to meet once a month with law students at their school and provide assistance as needed.

B) Professional Conduct

Today members are confronting many challenges unique to the times. Rapid changes in technology, economic and industrial downsizing, extreme debt, healthcare cost and aging, are just a few.

- 1) Continue to work with discipline to enhance procedures and establish rules related to ALAP participation.
- 2) Continue to review and identify problems confronting members of the bar and judiciary and develop programs and resources to address these issues.

C) With Respect to Professional Competence

- 1) ALAP will continue to develop and sponsor CLE programs which address the stressful nature of the practice of law and the difficult issues lawyers confront everyday. Presenting programs on resiliency, healthy coping skills and the development and maintenance of healthy boundaries better prepares lawyers when they encounter difficult situations and decreases the potential for ethical violations.
- 2). When individuals are stressed, depressed or utilize unhealthy mechanisms to cope, these issues reflect in every aspect of their lives and directly affects the manner in which they practice their profession. Currently an ALAP representative is not involved with the course on professionalism. Having a member of the committee directly involved with the development/presentation of this course can not only add additional insight but also identify solutions for inappropriate and unprofessional types of behaviors.
- 3) Assist with initiatives to improve the quality of life of both lawyers and the judiciary in Alabama by working with the appropriate bar or judicial committees. The ALAP director has been an active committee member on the ABA Judicial Assistance Initiative which published a handbook entitled Judges Helping Judges in November 2009. The members of JAI have also established a

hotline so that judges in need of assistance can speak with other judges who have had similar experiences.

- 4) Continue to access data, resources and professionals established in the community who specialize in the elderly and make these resources available.
- 5) Work with the Elder Law and Senior Lawyers sections of the bar to improve services available and establish procedures to better address aging and cognitive issues in the membership.

2. Advance Improvements in the Administration of Justice

- 1) Continue to be a resource for the Judicial Inquiry Commission when addiction, mental or emotional problems are present.
- 2) Research procedures and policies other states are implementing with regard to judicial referrals.
- 3) Establish procedures and policies for judicial referrals.
- 4) Continue to participate with the ABA COLAP Judicial Initiative
- 5) Continue to reach out to the judiciary and present educational programs about ALAP

3. Maintain an Effective State Bar Structure

- 1) Continue to update and review the committee in terms of goals and purpose
- 2) Establish subcommittees to address specific areas of focus.
- 3) Continue to stay updated on legislative issues that affect the quality and standards of addiction and mental health services.
- 4) Continue to update and review professional resources in the community as referral sources.
- 5) Continue to maintain active fund raising efforts for the Alabama Lawyer Assistance Foundation.

4. Serve Members Need While Enhancing the Use of Bar Technology and Communications

- 1) Research other state programs to find appropriate data management programs to improve the quality and accuracy of client file management.
- 2.) Continue to improve and update the ALAP web site to user friendly applications.
- 3) Continue to publish articles in the *Alabama Lawyer* which address issues related to lawyer health and well being.
- 4) Continue to utilize brochures, handouts and other material to improve program awareness.
- 5) Participate in educational programs to assure that highest standards and most up to date information is utilized when addressing client needs.

5. Advance the Principles of Racial, Ethnic, Gender, Age and Geographic Diversity

- 1) Continue to reach out to various ethnic, racial and gender populations.

- 2) Participate in educational programs about treatment and mental health approaches to different populations.
- 3) Continue to enhance the support systems established to assist with diversity populations.

Healthy and well balanced lawyers do not commit ethical violations nor do they get arrested for violating the laws they are duly sworn to up hold. Lawyer assistance is about promoting health and balance to improve the quality of life for all members. How the association addresses and supports these issues will be reflective in the manner in which our members practice their profession. Lawyers help individuals daily to prepare for the future, the unexpected and for other contingencies of life. It only makes sense that when a lawyer is in need of the same kind of assistance that similar resources are readily available.

The committee should elect from its membership a secretary who will be responsible for a written record of its actions. The secretary, or a designee, should keep minutes of all meetings of the committee, or any subcommittee. The original of the minutes will be filed with the Alabama State Bar within 14 days after the meetings, to be made a part of the committee's permanent file. The committee will divide itself into such subcommittees as may be necessary to effectively carry out its functions. The chairperson should appoint sub-chairs for each subcommittee.

The Alabama State Bar, through its designated staff liaison, will assist the committee in carrying out its purpose.

The committee should submit:

- (a) A written plan of action to the President by October 15, 2011, outlining its activities or programs for the year;
- (b) A written midyear report to the President by Feb. 15, 2012 detailing activities and accomplishments to date;
- (c) A report of its year's activities by June 30, 2012.

Done as of August 1, 2011



James R. Pratt, III
President, Alabama State Bar