



## **Judges Counselling Program**

### **President's Report to the Canadian Superior Court Judges Association (CSCJA), June 2025**

The Judges Counselling Program (JCP) serves approximately 3,000 federally and provincially appointed judges (including retired judges), masters, justices of the peace, associate judges/prothonotaries, and their families (including widows).

The JCP was first established in 1995. The CSCJA was instrumental in initiating the JCP, with support from the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs (FJA).

The goal of the JCP was to provide emergency treatment and assistance for judges and their family members suffering from depression and emotional and psychological problems caused by stress that was either job related or externally induced. Initially it was only available to federally appointed judges but eventually was expanded to include the additional groups identified above.

The JCP operates independently of the Canadian Judicial Council (CJC) and the Canadian Association of Provincial Court Judges, as a federally incorporated not-for-profit corporation, to ensure independent, confidential and effective monitoring of the services. It is operated by a Board of Directors and its service provider is TELUS Health.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

The JCP recognizes that confidentiality and privacy are of the utmost importance to judges and their families. The names of those who use the JCP services are never disclosed to the Board. Privacy is always guaranteed. No one will know a user has used the JCP unless they choose to tell someone.

### **JCP Services**

The JCP can quickly link judges and their eligible family members to a network of dedicated professionals who can provide confidential, short-term counselling services from experienced counselors, psychologists, social workers and other specialists.

Counselling Services may assist with issues such as family and marital relationships, personal and emotional difficulties, workplace stress, depression and anxiety, substance dependency, and grief and bereavement challenges.

Counselling can take different forms, including in-person, telephonic, video counselling, e-counselling (essential exchanges of e-mails when real time counselling is not possible and urgency is not an issue), and via chat line, as well as resource packages containing written material.

JCP also provides WorkLife Solutions which is a confidential advisory service to assist judges and their families in balancing work/life issues, including elder care, smoking cessation, nutrition counselling, general health guidance, Naturopathy, personal health and nutrition, parenting, relationships, retirement and financial and legal advice.

Recognizing that unique stresses can arise with very lengthy and difficult trials, it provides a specialized Trial Support Program designed by professionals at TELUS Health to support judges involved in such trials, pre-, during and post-trial, subject to approval.

The Workplace Support Program provides professional assessment and counselling to support judges who are experiencing performance issues at work that may be related to an underlying emotional, psychological or substance abuse problem. Referrals into this Program are made by the Chief Judge, Designated Regional Senior Judge, or Administrative Judge, only with the consent of the judge being referred. It provides an important alternative to client-initiated JCP counselling. It is a more intensive and specialized intervention that aims to help resolve issues through a monitored process, providing ongoing updates and feedback on attendance, management of goals, and potential obstacles to success. The information provided to the referring judge is limited to whether the referred judge is accessing the Program, attending appointments, and following recommendations. Details of the clinical circumstances are never disclosed. A structured relapse prevention program may also be accessed.

**JCP resources can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:**

- by calling 1-866-872-6336 (English or Français);
  - by calling TTY 1-800-363-6270 (hearing impaired) or ATS 1-800-263-8035 (personnes malentendantes);
  - through the JCP website, at [www.jcp.ca](http://www.jcp.ca) or [www.pcmagis.ca](http://www.pcmagis.ca)
- When using the website, if asked for a company name, use JCP or Judges Counselling Program.

**JCP Utilization Rates**

The JCP's overall utilization rate in the first three-quarters of the current fiscal year (July 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025) was 4.56%. When annualized this is a utilization rate of 6.09%. This is down from 4.77%, which when annualized is a utilization rate of 6.35%, the annual rate in the year ending March 31, 2024.

To March 31, 2025, of the 136 overall cases, 106 were accessed by a judge/member, 2 by retirees, and the remainder by spouses/partners or eligible dependents. Of the 136 counselling cases, the prevalent issues were personal stress and other emotional issues (56.5%), work related (15.3%) and family related issues (15.3%). Of the 4 Work-Life Services cases, the prevalent issues were personal health and wellbeing 80%) and financial.10%).

The Board will continue to monitor utilization rate statistics, as these may impact the negotiation of a new contract as well as potential future adjustments to the funding required in connection with the Program.

**Financing and Accountability of JCP**

The JCP contracts with TELUS Health (Canada's largest provider of counselling and assistance programs) to provide services on terms and at rates that are consistent with similar agreements across the industry. TELUS Health works with our Board to meet the unique needs of judges and their families.

Financial management of the program is provided through the FJA. The costs for federally- appointed judges are paid by FJA (the costs are not borne by the CSCJA). For other judicial officers covered by the



JCP (provincially-appointed judges, masters, justices of the peace and prothonotaries), FJA invoices the Chief Judges, or other appropriate party, on a per-member basis. The current cost per judge for participation in the JCP is \$65.00.

The JCP has always been attentive to ensuring responsible fiscal management, while maintaining the core services of priority to judges and their families. Building on the negotiations of Judge Messier on our previous contract signed in 2018, we were successful in renegotiating at a similar rate for another 3yrs of service beginning July 1, 2021.

The increase in fees, the cap imposed under the new contract, and the lower utilization rates has allowed the JCP to cover regular programming costs and to accumulate a surplus. These surpluses are earmarked to cover the adhoc services that may be requested by a chief judge and requiring Board approval.

#### **Board and Executive of the JCP**

The JCP strives to have a Board Member from each of its constituent groups. These Members also act as a resource for their Court. I am very grateful for the assistance and dedication of each of the JCP Board Members.

A sub-group of the Board acts as the Executive. Currently, the following are the members of the JCP Executive effective November 1, 2024:

- Justice Michele Hollins, President (Chair) – Alberta
- Justice Stanley Kershman, Past President - Ontario
- Justice Melanie Baldwin, Secretary Treasurer - Saskatchewan
- Judge Julie Messier, Quebec – Executive Vice President/CAPCJ Representative
- Judge Julia Morneau, Ontario – Provincial Court Judge representative
- Her Worship Lauren Scully, Ontario - Justice of the Peace Representative
- Justice Michael Thompson, Manitoba - Court of King's Bench, Family Division

In addition, the work of the JCP could not carry on without the immeasurable assistance of the following individuals, all of whom put in many hours of work on our behalf:

- Anne LeBel, Judicial Appointments Management Officer (FJA)
- Errollyn Humphreys, Deputy Commissioner (FJA)
- Diana Sosa, Account Executive, TELUS Health

All of which is respectfully submitted,



Michele Hollins  
President, Judges Counselling Program