

July 9, 2026

Subject: Study on the Health and Well-Being of Judges

Dear Judges,

I am pleased to share with you today the Research Report and Executive Summary on the health and well-being of judges. As you know, the Council initiated and commissioned this study – a first of its kind for federally appointed judges in Canada – to better understand health and well-being issues among judges. The Council mandated researchers with the *Université de Sherbrooke* to undertake this independent study, starting with a survey that 794 judges filled out. I want to thank each and everyone of you who took the time to participate.

Canada is fortunate to be served by a highly competent and skilled judiciary. An important step toward strengthening our judiciary is to shine a light on the realities facing judges – which is what this study was intended to do. The findings and recommendations provide the foundation for considering potential reforms that may help to ensure judges, and the justice system, can continue to serve the public as effectively as possible, both now and in the future.

The results of the study confirm what we may have already known. The overwhelming majority of participating judges indicated high satisfaction with the position they hold. Most judges report they find strong meaning in their work, and exhibit altruism and judicial collegiality. The study reveals the health and well-being of judges is also generally good, and better compared with Canadian lawyers. There are nonetheless inherent challenges that come with the judicial role, which influence health and well-being, including work overload, lack of administrative resources, challenges associated with an aging workforce, and the growing number of self-represented litigants. These factors do not come as a surprise. However, they do invite further reflection on the conditions under which we work. The health and well-being of judges is of critical importance, functioning as a practical and institutional safeguard for the administration of justice. It is therefore an area that demands sustained attention.

The report proposes a number of avenues for consideration to address the factors influencing the overall health and well-being of judges. It includes measures aimed at: addressing judges' work overload; supporting the retention of judges; reducing mental health stigma and strengthening access to the judges counselling program; and standardizing security measures for the judiciary.

Many of the proposed measures cannot be undertaken by the judiciary alone. Indeed, a number of the levers influencing judicial workload and conditions of judicial work, including ensuring the judiciary is well resourced both in the number of judges and in administrative personnel, actually fall under the responsibilities of provincial, territorial, and federal governments. And while many of the recommendations fall outside the mandate of chief justices, the Council is committed to ensuring judges are supported in the exercise of their functions.

The Council is considering next steps in light of the findings and recommendations arising from the study. In the interim, the Research Report and the Executive Summary will be shared with the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. In addition, the Council will seek to have the report shared with provincial and territorial governments. It will also be published on the Council website shortly.

I encourage all judges to read through this report, to look after themselves and one another, and to make use of the resources available to support the judiciary. An overview of those resources is provided in *Appendix A*.

The Research Report and the Executive Summary can be accessed at: <https://cjc-ccm.ca/en/study-health-and-well-being-judges-etude-sur-la-sante-et-le-bien-etre-des-juges>, using the password: **HWB_SBE2026**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Council's Health and Well-Being of Judges Working Group, for their assistance with this project. I would like to recognize the previous Chair of the Working Group, former Chief Justice Geoffrey Morawetz, as well as the current Chair, Associate Chief Justice Ken Nielsen, and, of course, the other members of the Working Group, Chief Justice Manon Savard and Chief Justice Tracey Clements.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW', written over a large, loopy initial 'O'.

The Right Honourable Richard Wagner, P.C.
Chief Justice of Canada and
Chairperson, Canadian Judicial Council

Encl.

Appendix A: Health and Well-Being Resources Available to Federally Appointed Judges

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Judges Counselling Program

As of June 1, 2026, Homewood Health became the provider of the Judges Counselling Program (JCP). The JCP is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, by telephone at 1-888-929-1229 or online at <https://jcp.ca/>. This fully confidential service is staffed by experienced counsellors, psychologists, social workers, and specialists who can assist a wide range of everyday challenges, including personal and professional stress, bereavement, family issues, and more.

National Judicial Institute (NJI) Resources Related to Health and Well-Being **Judicial Well-Being Subject Collection**

The NJI Judicial Well-Being Subject Collection offers judges a wide range of resources on topics such as stress management, resilience, managing traumatic evidence, and coping with a relentless workload. This resource collection includes practical strategies, tools, and peer-to-peer support for judges.

Podcast: Humanity and the Judicial Role

This NJI podcast series explores resilience, uncertainty, and the weight of decision-making. It considers what it means to be a judge, examining how to wield power with integrity, navigate self-doubt, and stay connected to one's humanity.

New Judges' Survival Guide

This Guide provides clear, quick, and practical solutions to the questions and challenges that can arise for new judges. It identifies common pitfalls, suggests ways to navigate them, and addresses issues such as health, anxiety, managing criticism, and exhaustion.

Webinar: The Psychological Impact of Judicial Work

In this webinar, Dr. Carly Schrever examines the psychological impact of judicial work, drawing on emerging research on judicial stress and well-being. The webinar also presents key findings on sources of stress across the judiciary and offers practical strategies.

Program Materials:

Emerging Issues Online Seminar: Judicial Wellness

Judges can access the e-binder from this program, which examines various psychological stressors of being a judge and offers participants suggestions for personal and institutional strategies that can be used to help manage and overcome well-being challenges.

Survive and Thrive: Decision-Making and Productivity Seminar

Judges can access the e-binder from this cutting-edge program, which offers participants the chance to work with judicial mentors to develop tailored strategies for becoming more productive and less stressed in their work environment and beyond.

Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics

The Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics (Committee) provides confidential, informal advice to federally appointed judges on prospective ethical issues. It is made up of puisne judges from every region in the country. The Committee offers advice in both English and French and maintains a bank

of previously provided opinions on ethical issues which are anonymized, indexed, and posted on JUDICLOUD for judges to consult.

The names of Committee members can be found on JUDICLOUD>Resources for Federally Appointed Judges>Ethics Committee, Judicial Advice and Info>Ethics Committee Members List.