

## **Words to Deeds: Housing: Identifying Barriers and Cutting Red Tape to Make it WORK**

Honorable Oscar Kazen

Todd Gilman, JD

Stephanie Regular, JD

Anita Fisher

Kathy Jett

### **Level**

Intermediate

### **Track**

Words to Deeds

### **CE**

CPA/BBS/CJER

### **Room**

Cardiff/Carlsbad

### **Bio**

**Honorable Oscar Kazen** is the Presiding Judge of Bexar County Probate Court 1 and previously served as Associate Probate Judge for Bexar County Probate Court 1, as well as being Judge Presiding of Bexar County Court at Law #9. During his 19 years of judicial service, he has presided over 100 jury trials without reversal or remand. During his early tenure in 2002, as a Criminal Court Judge, Judge Kazen attended the National Drug Court's Institute for Therapeutic Drug Courts and thereafter created and oversaw one of Bexar County's first Therapeutic Drug Courts. Shortly after his appointment in 2007, as Associate Probate Judge, he realized his passion for helping individuals with mental illness in the justice system. Judge Kazen created and oversaw the implementation of the first fully operational civil AOT court in Texas, serving at the intersection between the law and treatment of individuals with serious mental illness in a 52-county area. This court has served as a national model, saving lives and lessening the suffering of those with serious mental illness by offering an alternative to hospitalization. Prior to his appointment as an associate probate judge, he served as presiding judge of Bexar County Court at Law No. 9 and was a managing partner of Kazen & Robberson. Judge Kazen earned his JD from Thurgood Marshall School of Law and his BA from the University of Texas. Before attending college, Judge Kazen served in the United States Marine Corp.

**Todd Gilman, JD**, is the Supervising Deputy City Attorney for the Los Angeles Homeless Court, which is run by the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office. LA Homeless Court clears more than 1,000 infractions and low-level misdemeanors each year for unhoused people who are working with a service provider. Todd also developed, found funding for, and now oversees a pilot program in the San Fernando Valley focused on treating the highest users of emergency services (e.g., those with the most hospital visits, arrests and ambulance rides). This pilot, known as HMST (Homeless Multidisciplinary Street Team), was launched in July 2022 and has

already achieved a high success rate housing and treating a population that traditionally is very service-resistant. Todd was previously a Neighborhood Prosecutor for the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, where he focused on finding solutions both in- and out-of-court for unhoused, recidivist defendants. Prior to becoming a Neighborhood Prosecutor, Todd was a trial prosecutor in Ventura County. Before his legal career, Todd worked in investment banking and private equity. Todd attended UC Berkeley for undergrad and UCLA for law school.

**Stephanie Regular, JD**, is the Chairperson of the California Public Defender's Association's Mental Health/Civil Commitment Committee and the Supervisor of the Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office's Mental Health Unit. She was amicus counsel in *Stiavetti v. Ahlin* and has been appellate counsel in several cases in the First District Court of Appeal, including *In re Loveton*, in which the Court affirmed a sixty-day admission deadline for IST's committed out of the County's superior court. With over twenty years of experience as a public defender, Stephanie has handled hundreds of mental health cases, including cases of competent to stand trial, involuntary medication and civil commitment cases. Stephanie emerged as a leader in the statewide effort to reduce wait-times for state hospital admissions of individuals found incompetent to stand trial. Her behind-the-scenes efforts were critical for the enactment of SB 1187 and SB 317. Stephanie is a member of the Words to Deeds Leadership Group and CPDA's delegate to the State's IST Solutions Workgroup.

**Anita Fisher** served for ten years as the director of education at NAMI San Diego. She was responsible for managing the Mental Health Family and Peer Recovery Education, Support and Training Programs. Previously, Anita enjoyed a 30-year career in the banking industry, including serving as Vice President and Business Systems Analyst at Union Bank of California. Her entrance into the mental health arena began in 2005, a few years after her oldest son was diagnosed with a serious mental illness. Anita and her husband completed NAMI's *Family-to-Family* course, and it profoundly impacted their lives. Anita immediately dedicated herself to NAMI's mission of education, support, and advocacy for those affected by mental illness with a special interest in criminal justice and substance use disorder impacting those living with mental illness. In 2018 Anita retired from NAMI San Diego and launched an independent consulting business, Fisher Mental Health Consulting. Anita now enjoys semi-retirement with her husband and maintains her passion for serving those impacted by mental health challenges.

**Kathy Jett** has over 40 years of local and state government experience. She applies her passion and extensive knowledge of examining and implementing behavioral health and criminal justice programs with a specialty in substance use disorder programs and criminal justice settings. Having led major statewide organizations, Kathy is a confident manager and problem solver committed to bringing government and private programs and services to individuals suffering from substance use disorders, and to those caught up in the criminal justice system. Kathy advises on the latest innovations in treatment and evidence-based programs and practices to the health and public safety fields. She has traveled abroad to Amsterdam as part of a U.S. Delegation to learn firsthand about the country's substance use disorder laws, policies and approaches to treatment and harm reduction. Kathy has worked closely with state and local government to strengthen the state's community corrections capacity in California, connecting

former offenders to health care and behavioral health services, advancing the goals of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Lending her career knowledge and leadership, Kathy collaborated with state leaders, law enforcement, institutions and philanthropy to help implement the AB 109 Criminal Justice Realignment. Utilizing provisions from the ACA, she saw a unique opportunity for crafting a pathway to alleviate overcrowded jails and overburdened emergency rooms. Currently, Kathy is a consultant with Shatterproof ATLAS and the Department of Health Care Services for the implementation of an SUD Treatment Locator, including all state-licensed and certified programs

### **Narrative**

California's roll-out of housing opportunities inevitably comes with general and specific expectations of successful implementation across the spectrum (diversion, reentry, crisis and community-based placements, residential supports, etc.) The likely pressure from policy makers and the community at large to meaningfully serve and re-home justice impacted populations with mental health challenges may not recognize the unique implementation obstacles faced (legislative, bureaucratic, fiscal and administrative). By putting forth funding opportunities, policy makers have acknowledged the literature showing that multi-level barriers negatively impact community options for justice-involved people, and especially those facing mental health and substance use issues. Housing services and program providers need to anticipate when siloes, viewpoints or system disconnects prevent them from housing and serving people specifically with primary mental health diagnoses and/or exiting the justice system. California can address diversion, transition, prevention of crises and hard to engage populations in a more unified way. By identifying barriers across and within existing systems and new services, intentional collaboration can cut through red tape to expand the continuum of care and achieve preferred outcomes. The presenters will share insights focused on real (post-pandemic challenges, mandates, risk tolerance and budget realities) and perceived barriers (stigma, NIMBY, funding misconceptions and "nothing works"). Lastly, a broad framework for dialogue within local housing and service systems will be shared for discussion.

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Explain two roles, two responsibilities and two inevitable risks associated with changing how things get done in the various programs, initiatives, and service systems
2. Describe cross-system opportunities and best strategies to support sustained dialogue
3. Explain three shared insights about historically real barriers, perceived challenges and frame the language used in provider and justice systems
4. Provide two examples of intentional collaboration and communication
5. List three probable reactions from multi-level and cross agency perspectives
6. Identify two opportunities to share what needs to be adopted and adapted