

LAWYERS Assistance

By J.E. (Buddy) Stockwell

JLAP BY THE NUMBERS 2018-19

The Louisiana Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program's (JLAP) fiscal year 2018-19 ushered in an unprecedented focus, both nationally and locally, on lawyer wellness and well-being initiatives. The mission is to promote work/life balance, good wellness practices and self-care for ALL legal professionals to help reduce stress and improve the quality of life. By doing so at the outset, it can reduce the probability that legal professionals will develop serious issues with alcohol/substance use, depression or anxiety in the fullness of time.

In this vein, JLAP refined several CLE presentations last year including "The Professional Duty of Self-Care," "The Path to Lawyer Well-Being" and "Well-Being in the Legal Profession."

These new wellness presentations have nothing to do with addressing diagnosed alcoholism, addiction or mental health issues. On the contrary, these presentations support literally all members of the profession by providing lawyer-specific information, tools and resources about managing stress and self-care. This information can help improve the personal and professional happiness of every single Bar member without exception. The entire profession is developing a new appreciation for well-being and life balance strategies. JLAP personally delivered educational CLEs to more than 2,500 Bar members last year and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

As for JLAP's core clinical operations and services to assist those experiencing an actual mental health or substance use issue, JLAP is very grateful to report that it continues to provide 100% confidential clinical assistance to lawyers and judges, their family members, law firm and court staff, and law schools and law students. Nowadays, legal professionals are more confident than ever to reach out to JLAP in absolute privacy and before any disciplinary or bar admissions involvement.

Also, there is an increase in people

seeking help for mental health issues unrelated to substance use. JLAP continues to see more cases involving depression and anxiety issues. In fact, 29% of JLAP's new cases last year involved mental health issues with no substance use component whatsoever and 72% of JLAP's cases had a combination of mental health and substance use issues.

Within the realm of substance use disorder cases, JLAP's peer-support professionals' programming continues to produce the highest success rates achievable in the field of addiction. With an average of 125 formal monitoring cases at any given time, JLAP's annual no-relapse success rate was 96% last year. Thus, in the last four years, JLAP's no-relapse rates have been, respectively, 94%, 97%, 94% and 96%, rendering a *dependable and remarkable 95.25% average no-relapse success rate in alcoholism and addiction recovery under monitoring.*

JLAP confidentially saves lives and careers, but it has always performed a very important regulatory service as defined in the watershed case, *Louisiana State Bar Association v. Arthur F. Dumaine*, 550 So.2d 1197 (La. 1989), wherein the Court ordered the Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse to organize a state LAP and provide the Court with expert, independent, objective and reliable data regarding the diagnosis, treatment and recovery of respondents in cases where substance abuse is a causative factor in unethical conduct.

JLAP is also specifically endorsed in La. R.S. 37:221 which declares it is the public policy of Louisiana to promote confidential interventions and peer-support specifically through JLAP and the LSBA's Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.

As of late, with supportive resolutions by both the LSBA and the Louisiana Attorney Disciplinary Board (LADB), the Louisiana Supreme Court recently amended Rule XIX Section 24E3 to specify JLAP as the Court's monitoring authority

in lawyer discipline. The Court had already specified JLAP in Rules XVII and XXIII (bar admissions and the judiciary). As such, JLAP is now uniformly recognized as the Court's monitoring provider, effectively codifying 30 years of jurisprudence that has consistently required JLAP compliance when there is an issue regarding impairment and fitness to practice.

The resolution and evolution achieved last year by JLAP emanates in large measure from specific recommendations by independent national experts who completed a Performance Audit for JLAP in 2015 (and an Addendum in 2018). Recommendations were made to JLAP on operating a top program and recommendations were also made to stakeholders regarding critical support that JLAP must receive in order to maintain the recommended programming.

All said, JLAP has never been more effective. JLAP is making real differences in the personal and professional lives of literally thousands of Bar members each year. JLAP is extremely grateful for the strong support it receives from all stakeholders and corners of the profession. In Louisiana, by working together, we are all succeeding in improving the well-being of the profession, saving lives and careers, and reliably protecting the public when called upon to do so!

For more information, find JLAP's Annual Reports online: <https://louisianajlap.com/about-us/annualreports/>.

If you or someone you know needs JLAP's help, don't wait! Call JLAP confidentially at (985)778-0571 or email JLAP confidentially at jlap@louisianajlap.com.

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