



*The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force is the voice of the community on issues related to the quality and responsiveness of mental health and substance abuse disorder services.*

## **Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force 2019 *Outstanding Achievement Award***

The Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) is awarding its first *Outstanding Achievement Award* to *Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey Altenburg, Deputy Public Defender Regional Attorney Manager Paige Styler, Assistant District Attorney Kelly Hedge and SPD Attorney Manager Dawn Rablin* for their work in creating a nationally recognized Early Interventions program at the front door of the criminal justice system to focus on remedial strategies for individuals facing criminal charging - many of whom have a history of serious and persistent mental illness. These lawyers have worked tirelessly to create new opportunities for those with symptoms of mental illness at risk of being trapped in the criminal justice system.

These efforts began in 2007 and expanded with grant funding by the National Institute of Corrections and the *MacArthur Foundation Safety and Justice Challenge*. These lawyers became the fiercest advocates for the community mental health and housing services needed to break the often destructive cycle of homelessness, mental illness, police contact leading to arrest and then return to the community. They partnered with any agency or community advocate they could find to ensure the best possible chance of success for clients.

They also worked closely with the Milwaukee Circuit Court System under the leadership of Milwaukee County Chief Judge Maxine White, the Office of County Executive Chris Abele and his key administrative staff including Mary Jo Meyers, DHHS Director; Mike Lappen, Behavioral Health Division Administrator; and James Mathy, Housing Division Administrator.

Congratulations and thank you to the following honorees for their outstanding advocacy and service:

- **Deputy District Attorney Jeffrey Altenburg** has been a prosecutor in the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office for over 20 years. He is in charge of work done by the Early Intervention and Community Prosecutors in his office. He has taken direct responsibility for the development of nationally recognized programs at the Front Door of the criminal justice system. This work began in 2007 and has been enhanced

through substantial work and grant funding through the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and the MacArthur Foundation.

- **Deputy Regional Attorney Manager Paige Styler** has worked in the Office of the State Public Defender for over twenty years and now helps manage the Milwaukee Trial Office. As a lawyer and advocate she has distinguished herself in the representation of clients with mental illness, substance abuse and disabilities in our criminal justice system. Starting in 2007, she has been a critical voice in the development of the Early Interventions program and related projects funded by the MacArthur Foundation. She supervises the work of the Public Defender's Office that is tied to critical reform efforts among many other duties.
- **Assistant District Attorney Kelly Hedge** has been a career prosecutor with the Milwaukee District Attorney's office. In addition to her many assignments during her career she has been a Community Prosecutor focusing on homelessness issues in District One and the District Attorney assigned to Early Interventions to build some of the Early Intervention projects funded by the MacArthur Foundation including Post Booking Stabilization which was a pre-charging diversion of people with serious and persistent mental illness.
- **Attorney Manager Dawn Rablin** has been with the Office of the State Public Defender for over 20 years. She has distinguished herself in the representation of clients with mental illness, substance abuse and disabilities. As a supervisor with the SPD, she oversees a team of lawyers who work in the Early Interventions program include our Drug Treatment Court and Veterans' Initiative. She has been actively involved with all of this work including the projects supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

In addition to the four honorees, the Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force recognizes the efforts of the countless partners who continue to support the important work of diverting people with mental illness from the criminal justice system, as well as supporting re-entry with the needed community supports and resources.