

Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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From Protection to Support: An Innovative Alternative to Guardianship

Second Judicial District Court Launches a Statewide Conversation

Reno, Nev. July 13, 2017. Judge Frances Doherty of the Second Judicial District Court, together with a group of committed partners, will travel across Northern Nevada July 17 through July 20 for a series of outreach events on Supported Decision-Making as an alternative to guardianship for seniors and adults with disabilities.

In December 2016, the Second Judicial District Court received a grant from the National Resource Center for Supported Decision-Making to explore this innovative alternative to guardianship for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (“I/DD”). Supported Decision-Making is a process in which trusted supporters help adults with I/DD, who are independent in some areas of life and need assistance in others, make life choices about housing, healthcare, education, employment, social supports, and similar matters. Unlike a traditional guardianship, conservatorship, or power of attorney, the supported adult makes the final decision. Judge Doherty applied for the grant, which was endorsed by Justice James Hardesty and the Nevada Adult Guardianship Commission, Washoe County Public Guardian’s Office, journalists, non-profits, and legal aid organizations.

Presentations are scheduled in Carson City on July 17, Winnemucca on July 18, Elko on July 19, and Ely on July 20. The group will visit Southern Nevada in fall 2017.

“The 2017 legislative session marked a sea change for guardianship reform,” Judge Doherty said. “There is momentum and appetite for a shift in how we approach aging and disability communities to assist their decision-making in a way that maximizes independence and responsibility. We are excited the conversation about Supported Decision-Making and less restrictive alternatives to guardianship is happening across Nevada on a statewide level.”

Dr. Elaine Brown, with the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Sierra Regional Center commented, “We know that decision making is fundamental to our self-determination and dignity, no matter how big or small a decision. As a professional in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities, as a sister, and as a parent, I welcome alternatives to guardianship that allow for the fulfillment of a promise that all people are afforded the right to make choices in their lives with the support of trusted family, friends, and networks.”

The outreach team will include Judge Doherty, Second Judicial District Court staff, disability and elder rights advocacy groups, attorneys, rural regional centers, public guardians, and legal aid organizations.

For a complete calendar of events, contact: Department 12 (775) 328-3164 or AdultGuardianship@washocourts.us

Additional information on supported decision-making can be found at: <http://www.supporteddecisionmaking.org>

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