



THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF
SAN FRANCISCO

MEMORANDUM

To: Criminal Panel Members
From: Julie Traun
IDA Attorney Administrator
Date: October 8, 2009
Re: **Behavioral Health Court**

The Court has requested that BASF notify all conflict panel attorneys who are representing clients in BHC that attorney appearances in BHC are mandatory. When an appointed attorney is unable to appear with his or her client, the Court requires counsel to arrange for a special appearance by substitute counsel who knows the client and/or with whom the client feels comfortable. The Court has notified BASF that on occasion, attorneys fail to appear, alerting the court clerk at the last minute that “someone” should stand in for them. The Court has further advised that if an attorney is not able to make his/her appearances or arrange appropriate coverage, he/she should ask to be relieved.

The Court has emphasized that almost all attorneys appearing in BHC are extremely conscientious about their appearances and maintain a close client relationship, acknowledging that mental health improvements are often achieved through continuity of counsel. The Court highly values the role and contributions of defense counsel in BHC and the BHC Court is very appreciative of your consistent participation.

Further, for the convenience of counsel and in an effort to contain costs and keep appearances as short as possible, the Court will call appointed counsel matters *first* to avoid waiting time.

Effective immediately, appointed counsel are instructed to arrive on **Tuesdays at 2:15 p.m.** instead of 1:30 p.m. The Court will conduct case conferences at 1:30 for clients represented by the public defender. Private counsel conferences will commence at 2:15-2:30 and the courtroom calendar will thereafter be called at 3:00 or earlier. With this new schedule, waiting time will be minimized, thereby reducing billing time.

On **Thursdays**, appearances are scheduled for BOTH 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and as noted, cases with appointed counsel will be called first.

Information about BHC and defense representation is available on the Superior Court’s website, Office of Collaborative Justice Programs: www.sftc.org/collaborativejustice and click on “Behavior Health Court.”