**MEMO**

DATE: **April 20, 2022**

TO: **OCJ Judges, Justices of the Peace, Crown Attorney, Defence**

**Bar, IPC Team, Legal Aid, and Court Staff**

FROM: **Justice Leszczynski – Local Administrative Justice**

**RE: RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON APPEARANCES IN THE WELLNESS COURT**

As you know, the Directive of the Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice regarding mode of appearances did not specifically address the transition to in-person appearances for specialized courts. This is being addressed locally in conjunction with each specialized court committee.

I can advise that the Wellness Court Committee has met and agreed that the **Wellness Court** will be transitioning back to in-person appearances **commencing May 17, 2022 in courtroom 302 at 2:00 pm**. It is expected that all appearances in this Court starting on May 17 will be in-person, absent exceptional circumstances. The Wellness Court team, including the Crown, a specially assigned duty counsel, a probation officer and a representative from the Canadian Mental Health Association will all be attending this court in-person starting on May 17, 2022 to ensure that individuals in this Court have access to representation and service referrals as the case may require.

If Duty Counsel or Defence counsel request and the presiding justice determines that exceptional circumstances exist such that a plea can proceed by zoom, these matters will specifically be scheduled to take place at 3:00 pm or later to ensure that those persons who attend in person are dealt with first. If a matter is scheduled to proceed by zoom, it is expected that all persons participating by zoom, will appear by video, as opposed to audio.

Thank you.

Justice Leszczynski, LAJ – Lambton County