

1 **IN THE TRIAL COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA**

2 **FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

3 **In the Matter of**)
4)
5 **THERAPEUTIC COURT**)
6 **PROCEEDINGS**)
7 **In the First Judicial District.**)
)

7 **PRESIDING JUDGE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 20-03**

8 Participants in therapeutic courts have substance abuse issues and, often, related
9 other issues, which make the participants particularly vulnerable to relapse. Therapeutic courts
10 are designed to provide monitoring of and support for the participants in order to assist them to
11 maintain their sobriety and move forward with their lives. Most therapeutic courts have periodic
12 sessions that are comprised of two components: a private meeting of the therapeutic team to
13 discuss the progress and needs of each participant; and, a session in open court which the
14 participant and others attend and the participant’s progress is acknowledged and difficulties are
15 addressed.

16 Some of the therapeutic court Judges statewide have reasonably construed
17 Supreme Court Order No. 1957, Chief Justice Order No. 8131, and the Presiding Judges’
18 Statewide Administrative Order Governing Relaxation and Suspension of Various Court Rules
19 Based on the COVID-19 Pandemic (PJ Order) to mean they cannot hold the private meetings
20 and/or the open court sessions.

21 These suspensions are increasing the risk that participants will relapse and suffer
22 other recovery setbacks. The stress and emotional turmoil being experienced by participants due
23 to the COVID-19 pandemic makes it even more important that the therapeutic courts continue to
24 assist their participants to the extent reasonably possible. And it is not clear at this point how
25 long the Alaska Court System will be operating under the above pandemic related Orders.

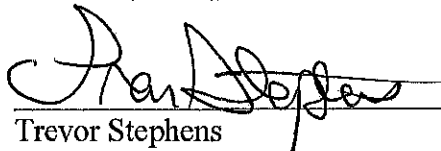
PRESIDING JUDGE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 20-03

1 So the undersigned is issuing this Order to clarify that in the First Judicial
2 District, provided that the necessary Court System clerical staffing is reasonably available;
3 therapeutic court private meetings and court proceedings may continue by telephone or, if
4 reasonably available, video link, per Section 33 of the PJ Order at the discretion of the
5 therapeutic court Judge. The Judge may also determine whether it is appropriate for a meeting or
6 court hearing to proceed with only a subset of the usual participants.

7 The Presiding Judges hereafter will be issuing a statewide order that will address
8 the functioning of therapeutic courts statewide.

9 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

10 Dated at Ketchikan, Alaska this 20th day of April 2020.

11 
12 _____
13 Trevor Stephens
14 Presiding Judge – First Judicial District

15
16
17
18
19
20 Distribution:

21 Chief Justice Joel Bolger
22 Administrative Director Stacey Marz
23 Court Rules Attorney Stacy Steinberg
24 ACA
25 Superior Court Judges
District Court Judges
Magistrate Judges
Clerks of Court

PRESIDING JUDGE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 20-03