

From: [OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK](#)
To: [Martinez, Jacquelynn](#)
Subject: FW: Thoughts on Proposed rule change for public defense
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From: Pedro Navarro <navarropedro2019@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 17, 2024 10:28 AM
To: OFFICE RECEPTIONIST, CLERK <SUPREME@COURTS.WA.GOV>
Subject: Thoughts on Proposed rule change for public defense

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I am writing to weigh in on the proposed rule change for public defense.

I do honestly believe public defenders are overworked and need a lighter case load so that they can provide effective representation and investigation to the clients cases.

But I believe there is a simple solution to the problem of public defenders being overworked and that will also combat the legal problem into days society with a record number of people who can not afford the high price of an attorney but may require legal help writing and filing motions or briefs or may require representation at a specific hearing or issue.

I believe the legal system in Washington State should have a similar structure to the medical system in Washington state.

Like for example let's look at the medical field. In the medical field in Washington State you have Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, and registered nurses, along with other medical professionals and support staff. Nurse Practitioners have less training and education then doctors but in Washington state have full practice authority. Nurse practitioners can act as primary care providers, diagnose illnesses, order and interpret tests, admit patients to medical facilities, refer patients to other medical professionals, prescribe medications and narcotics, and open their own clinic etc.

Now going back to the legal field, attorneys are the equivalent of doctors, then we can have an advanced paralegal practitioner who can be admitted and licensed to practice law and represent clients which will be the equivalent of a nurse practitioner, and then a regular paralegal who will be the equivalent of a registered nurse.

In Washington State if we had a structure similar to that in the legal field it could alleviate some of the case loads from the attorney but then also provide cheaper legal representation for citizens who can't afford the high price of an attorney.

For example if this court created an advanced paralegal practitioner position or something similar, then public defenders offices throughout the state could hire them to alleviate some of the workload from the attorney and it would save the state and counties more money in the long run. Because while the average salary in king county for a public defender is around \$180,000 they would be able to pay an advanced paralegal practitioner a substantial amount less because in essess they would have less education but still be qualified to give legal advice and represent clients in court and held to the same standards as attorney's.

Or let's say an advanced paralegal practitioner got hired by a law firm that practices guardianship or divorce law but the client can't afford the \$400 an hour not the law firm can assign that client to advanced paralegal practitioner and now can charge the client \$100 or \$200 per hour which the client can afford now. Or if the advanced paralegal practitioner went into private practice and decided to practice criminal law or appeals etc they can charge less than an attorney which may be more attainable to a lot more people.

It's just something I've been thinking about a lot because you have nurse practitioners who are not doctors diagnosing illnesses, prescribing meds, and making decisions that could be life threatening to patients so why not have a similar model in the legal field to make it more affordable to low income people and they can still get representation in legal matters.

I believe it would be a successful program with the appropriate guidelines and rules of professional conduct and other states could follow suit. It can allow low income people to afford legal representation and also it can supplement the public defenders shortage.

All throughout this country we have Nurse Practitioners and other medical professionals who are not doctors legally practicing medicine and diagnosing and prescribing medicine and making life or death decisions. Because they can erroneously diagnose a patient that could be a life or death illness or prescribe the wrong medicine that could substantially harm the patient because at the same time they are not doctors still but it's legal.

So why can't we have a program like that in the legal system. I believe it would be extremely beneficial.

If this court is interested in looking into a program like that I am willing to communicate with this court and assist in developing and proposing a program.