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From: Anelia Dikovytska Brown <adb@morlawnj.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 5, 2021 12:33 PM
To: Comments Mailbox
Subject: [External]Comments on 7/16/21 Notice to the Bar re: Proposal for Remote Court Operations

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Dear Judge Grant,

After completing a judicial clerkship at Bergen County Superior Court, I have been practicing as a medical malpractice defense attorney for the last five years. I vehemently disagree with the plan to conduct the motion arguments and case management conferences in all trial divisions of the Superior Court and the Municipal Courts remotely in perpetuity. The courts should return to in-person operations as quickly as possible. Conducting conferences and oral arguments remotely deprives the law clerks from observing the attorneys' appearances and learning from them what is effective and what is not. It also deprives the younger attorneys from the opportunity to appear and argue before the court in a proper, formal setting. I feel that the younger generation of attorneys has already lost some of the respect for our judicial system due to the new, less formal Zoom setting of most appearances. The younger generation of attorneys now sometimes fails to recognize that court appearances require proper business attire and proper presentation before the court. If going to crowded stores and restaurants is permissible at this point, there is no reason why several attorneys cannot make appearances in person in the typically spacious and well-ventilated courtrooms in the New Jersey courthouses. Of course, for attorneys with particular health concerns, there would always be an option to either seek permission to appear telephonically while others attend in person or to seek permission to conduct the hearing remotely.

Furthermore, conducting most court appearances remotely forces us to spend even more time in front of our screens. In-person appearances allowed us to at least occasionally give our eyes a break and step away from our computers. I feel that continuing most appearances remotely would negatively affect the attorney practice. It would eliminate what I consider to be the crucial part of our practices, particularly for newer attorneys. While there are circumstances in which it may be more convenient for the court or the attorneys, particularly in cases with numerous counsel involved, to occasionally allow for a phone conference proceeding, this should be the exception, not the rule. The proposal to conduct appearances remotely in perpetuity should be reconsidered, as these proposed changes are unacceptable and would be detrimental to the practice of law.

Respectfully submitted,

Anelia Dikovytska Brown



Anelia Dikovytska Brown
Counselor at Law
(973) 409-6600 | adb@morlawnj.com
www.morlawnj.com
240 Cedar Knolls Road, Suite 104, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

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