

THE COVID-19 CONTINUITY OF COURT OPERATIONS DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY WORKGROUP

State Courts Building ♦ 1501 West Washington Street ♦ Phoenix, AZ 85007

July 1, 2020

Chief Justice Robert M. Brutinel
Arizona Supreme Court
1501 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Protocol for In-Courthouse COVID-19 Exposure or Symptoms by a Participant in Arizona State Courts

Dear Chief Justice Brutinel,

We are pleased to submit the attached “Protocol for In-Courthouse COVID-19 Exposure or Symptoms by a Participant in Arizona State Courts.” This document sets forth a recommended protocol for courts to address in-courthouse COVID-19 exposure or symptoms by a participant in Arizona Courts as of today, Wednesday, July 1, 2020. This Protocol is the product of the Supreme Court of Arizona’s COVID-19 Continuity of Court Operations During a Health Emergency Workgroup and the Jury Management Subgroup (collectively, the “Plan B Workgroup”) in response to a question raised during the Superior Court Presiding Judges’ Meeting on Monday, June 22, 2020.

The policies and procedures set forth in the attached Protocol are current as of July 1, 2020. Because our knowledge of the pandemic situation is changing quickly, we recommend that courts consider all additional information available (both from a public health perspective and based on experience in courts) in addressing any in-courthouse COVID-19 exposures. To this end, the Plan B Workgroup is seeking guidance on the Protocol procedures from the medical field. The Plan B Workgroup will likely submit an expanded protocol incorporating input from the medical perspective.

This Protocol is designed to provide guidance to local courts for both non-jury in-person proceedings as well as in-person jury trials. Particularly given recent developments, local courts deciding when and how those proceedings should occur has cycled up and then, more recently, cycled back down based on a constant reassessment of available information. Given the changing nature of the pandemic, the Protocol is offered as a resource to local courts when a local court decides to undertake such proceedings, not advice to a local court to decide whether or when to hold or resume proceedings.

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We have been fortunate to have Dr. Paula Hannaford-Agor, Principle Researcher for the National Center for State Courts (NCSC), review an early draft of the Protocol, providing valuable input which is incorporated in this Protocol. The Plan B Workgroup plans to continue to follow and incorporate any additional, related best practice recommendations from NCSC, the CDC, and others providing helpful insight to these important issues.

With your approval, we will make the “Protocol for In-Courthouse COVID-19 Exposure or Symptoms by a Participant in Arizona State Courts” available to the Arizona Judicial Branch.

Your consideration of our recommended Protocol and continuing support of the Plan B Workgroup efforts are deeply appreciated.

Very truly yours,

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Enclosure

Copy with enclosure via email to:

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