

## **Bar Association Committee – VT Commission on the Well-being of the Legal Profession**

### **Minutes – April 23, 2018 Telephone Conference**

**Present:** Samara Anderson, Teri Corsones, Andrew Delaney, Jennifer Emens-Butler, Kyle Landis-Marinello, Michael Kiey and Rachel Strecker.

**CLE Programming Recommendation:** Michel and Jennifer led the discussion regarding Recommendation 36.1, which provides that bar associations should develop and regularly offer educational programming on well-being-related topics. They provided a number of related materials in advance of the meeting, including a memorandum detailing the present status of efforts to incorporate well-being topics into VBA programs and media.

**CLE Programs:** Jennifer explained that in recent years the VBA has tried to include at least one wellness-related CLE program at each of the VBA major meetings. The major meetings include the Annual Meeting in the Fall, the Mid-Year Meeting in the Spring, and the Solo and Small Firm Conference every other year. The other major meeting is the Mid-Winter Thaw in January, which the Young Lawyers Division coordinates. It doesn't appear that a wellness-related CLE program is typically offered at the Thaw. The VBA will also be offering a Tech Conference in May this year, and if it is successful, the plan is to offer it in the years that are alternate to the Solo and Small Firm Conference years. Jennifer suggested that whereas a wellness-related CLE might not lend itself to a Tech Conference, wellness programs could otherwise be promoted at future Tech Conferences. Teri will check with the YLD regarding the possibility of including a wellness-related CLE program at the Thaw, on a regular basis.

**Vermont Bar Journal:** The Bar Journal is published quarterly. Several articles and columns about wellness-related topics have been included in recent editions. In addition, the "Pursuits of Happiness" articles that Jennifer has included in the last several editions feature an activity that lawyers participate in, outside of work, that brings them happiness. She plans to continue those articles for as long as she finds willing subjects.

**Social Media:** Mike Kennedy has consistently discussed wellness matters in his Ethical Grounds blog, and such stories are shared, retweeted, liked and posted through the VBA website. Jennifer suggested putting the Pursuits of Happiness articles on social media, also, and maybe using social media to gather input from members regarding wellness topics.

**VLS Event:** Samara will be offering a Mindfulness Program at the Vermont Law School to VLS alumni on June 14, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. She asked if the program could be publicized through VBA Connect. Teri briefly relayed the VBA policy that generally prohibits advertising CLE programs that compete with VBA CLE programs. The policy is based on the VBA's heavy reliance on CLE income to cover operating expenses. The more CLE income there is, the lower VBA dues can be.

Members discussed the possibility of the VBA Board making an exception for the policy, given the importance of wellness-related CLE's. Teri will check with the Board. Samara also asked if any of the other Commission committees, in particular the Lawyers Assistance Program Committee, might plan a committee meeting at the time of the program on June 14, so that the committee can request input from those in attendance at the program. Teri will check with Josh Simonds about that possibility.

**Committee Recommendations:** Members recommend that the VBA offer at least one well-being-related CLE program at each of the VBA major meetings, including the Annual Meeting, Mid-Year Meeting, every-other-year Solo and Small Form Conference, and at the Mid-Winter Thaw. The every-other-year Tech Conference should promote wellness -related programs, if it's not feasible to offer a wellness-related CLE program at the Tech Conferences. Each Bar Journal edition should also include at least one wellness-related article, and every effort should be made to publicize wellness-related topics on VBA social media.

The next telephone conference meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 21 at 3:00 p.m. The call-in number is 1-877-27-420 and the conference room is 566-656-878. The topic will be "Education Materials". Teri will send materials in advance of the meeting. Michael recommended the ABA COLAP site for materials, and Samara recommended the NYS Bar Association resources. Teri will review each.

Teri Corsones