

3.19.2020

Members;

This afternoon, a group of private defense counsel, Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo Onofri, MCBA Executive Director Sam Iraca, and Mercer County Presiding Criminal Judge Peter Warshaw had a conference call to discuss the state of operations going forward for the criminal bar. As was indicated in Judge Jacobson's earlier email, Judge Warshaw told us that the Civil Courthouse at 175 South Broad Street will be completely closed by the end of business on Friday, March 20th. Moving forward, the Criminal Courthouse located at 400 South Warren Street will be open but operating on an extremely limited basis for emergent criminal and civil matters.

Judge Warshaw told us that by next week, the goal is to have only a few personnel in the criminal courthouse dealing with those emergent matters. The judges and court staff have all been set up for remote work, and Judge Warshaw wanted the members of the bar to know that all judges and staff are available by email and will be accessible as needed. The judiciary is continuing to develop plans to possibly hear motions, move sentences, take pleas and address bench warrants remotely utilizing Zoom and Scopia. The bar association is in the process of scheduling trainings for these video conferencing tools for attorneys who may need them.

Judge Warshaw wanted us to stress that his main focus, and the focus of all the judges, is to be as accessible and available as possible, and that we should all feel free to reach out with any issues that may arise. He also stressed that the court is pleased the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, Mercer County Public Defender's Office and the Mercer County Bar Association have been collaborating.

Should you require any assistance and not know where to go, please reach out to Judge Warshaw, the Criminal Division Manager or the Assistant Division Manager. In the event you are still in need of assistance, reach out to Samantha Iraca, Executive Director at the Bar.

Jenna Casper Bloom
Co-Chair, Criminal Bench Bar Committee

Lauren Scardella
Co-Chair, Municipal Bench Bar Committee