



## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

### News for Immediate Release

April 20, 2023

#### **Local Autism Court Summit Educates and Trains Court Personnel and Partners**

**HARRISBURG** — Recognizing the importance of training and education, a regional summit on Autism and the Courts was held today in Pittsburgh for Allegheny County court personnel and partners focusing on the basics about autism, diagnosis and community support.

Spearheaded by Supreme Court Justice Kevin Dougherty on behalf of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, the regional summit is part of the Autism and the Courts effort and expands on work being done statewide.

“Education and awareness are critical to ensuring we are providing for the needs of all court users, especially those with Autism,” Dougherty said. “The more we learn, the more we grow as a system and as a community, but most importantly in our ability to be part of the type of positive change that will impact Pennsylvania families.”

Attendees represented 18 different organizations, including local children and youth, courthouse personnel, law enforcement, schools and community service providers. Speakers for the Allegheny County summit included:

- Justice Kevin Dougherty, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
- Dr. Tammy Hughes, Licensed School Psychologist Autism Expert, Duquesne University
- Lindy Mishler, MS, Clinical Consultant for the Bureau of Supports for Autism and Special Populations, Office of Developmental Programs
- Hon. Jennifer McCrady, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County
- Hon. Hugh McGough, Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County

Nearly one in 36\* Pennsylvania children and more than five million adults nationwide are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

For more information on the Autism in the Courts initiative, visit [www.pacourts.us/learn/autism-and-the-courts](http://www.pacourts.us/learn/autism-and-the-courts).

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*\*Statistic from Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network, 2023*