

JUSTICE ON TARGET

June 4, 2008

Justice on Target is the province's strategy to reduce delay in Ontario's criminal courts.

TARGETS

Ontario will achieve faster, focused justice by targeting 30 per cent reductions in the provincial average of days and court appearances needed to complete a criminal case. The province plans to meet its target in four years.

TRANSPARENCY

Ontarians can follow the progress of courts in their local community towards reaching the targets through a transparent new *Justice on Target* website, which for the first time makes [criminal case statistics dating back to 2000](#) publicly available.

LEADERS

[Senior Regional Justice Bruce Durno](#) has been appointed to lead the *Justice on Target* strategy, and [Senior Crown Attorney Kenneth Anthony](#) has been appointed as the ministry's senior lead.

Mr. Justice Durno was appointed a judge of the Superior Court of Justice in 1998, and has served as Regional Senior Justice for the Central West region since 2000. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Mr. Justice Durno was a criminal defence lawyer and served as president of the Criminal Lawyers' Association.

Kenneth Anthony has been a prosecutor with the Ministry of the Attorney General since 1976. In that time, he has served as Crown Attorney in Scarborough and the District of Muskoka. Most recently, Mr. Anthony was a senior legal expert to a ministry team working on measures to increase the effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

Mr. Justice Durno and Mr. Anthony will:

- Oversee an implementation team working on the ground in local courthouses
- Engage the Judiciary, the Criminal Defence bar, Crown prosecutors and the police
- Develop and implement new initiatives to help meet the target
- Report to a results table chaired by Attorney General Chris Bentley.

Mr. Justice Durno, Mr. Anthony and the implementation team will work collaboratively with the partners in Ontario's justice system to get advice and identify further initiatives to help meet the province's target. The team will then put these initiatives into action, measure progress and adjust course as necessary.

Two successful initiatives are being expanded to help meet the province's target: Dedicated Prosecution and On-Site Legal Aid.

DEDICATED PROSECUTION

Dedicated Prosecution is an innovative system that changes the way cases are managed by Crown prosecutors. It allows them to continually monitor the progress of their cases and make appropriate decisions earlier in the court process. This helps reduce the time needed to complete a case, and allows more cases to move through the system faster and more effectively.

Under Dedicated Prosecution, small tight-knit teams of Crown prosecutors and support staff are given ownership of cases from the beginning of the court process until the case proceeds to trial. Traditionally, several Crown attorneys could deal separately with a criminal case before it is completed. Each one would need to be familiar with the case file, the accused and their counsel, increasing the time it takes to complete the case.

As part of the *Justice on Target* strategy, the province aims to have Dedicated Prosecution operating in all 17 high volume court locations in the province by the end of the year.

ON-SITE LEGAL AID

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) currently accepts on-site applications in nine Ontario courthouses. To help meet its target, the province will work with LAO to place legal aid application offices in an additional 17 criminal court locations in Ontario in the coming months. Once open, on-site legal aid offices will be operating in 26 courthouses serving almost 80 per cent of criminal legal aid clients province-wide.

In these locations, an accused person can apply for legal aid on-site and, if successful, could retain a lawyer more quickly. Getting a lawyer on the case faster can help reduce the number of appearances needed to complete a case, and allow more cases to move through the system more effectively.

LAO is also innovating a simplified online application process. LAO staff will be able to help a client apply for a legal aid certificate online and if approved, print it right away. This service will also be expanded in the coming months to allow defence counsel and caseworkers to access the system.

JUSTICE ON TARGET AND THE CODE/LESAGE REVIEW

The *Justice on Target* strategy is focused on the everyday cases that make up 90 per cent of the Ontario criminal justice system. In February Attorney General Chris Bentley asked the Honourable Patrick LeSage and Professor Michael Code to lead a review of the way we deal with the other 10 per cent – the large and complex criminal cases.

This review will address systemic issues and help to develop solutions for everyone involved in the justice system with the goal of moving cases through the system faster and more effectively.

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