



Its Objectives Achieved, the *Wilkes* Case is Dismissed

Middletown, Connecticut. January 13, 2021. The case of *Wilkes v. Lamont* was filed in response to COVID-19 deaths and unsafe conditions in two of Connecticut's state psychiatric hospitals, Connecticut Valley Hospital and Whiting Forensic Hospital. In the spring COVID-19 surge, five patients died and scores of patients and staff were infected.

The Plaintiffs, five hospital patients, asked the U.S. District Court to require state officials, including the Governor, to improve infection control at the hospitals, limit admissions, and accelerate discharges. The plaintiffs are represented by the Connecticut Legal Rights Project (CLRP), the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, and the Center for Public Representation.

The goals of the case have largely been achieved. We thank the Governor and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for improved safety protocols at the hospitals and getting the COVID-19 outbreaks at the hospitals under control. We also thank the Governor's COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group for recognizing that individuals in state psychiatric hospitals should be vaccinated on a priority basis.

Because the Plaintiffs and the class they sought to represent will soon be vaccinated, today the *Wilkes* case was dismissed.

The pandemic has amplified concerns about Connecticut's over-reliance on institutions and statewide deficiencies in community services for people with mental illness. CLRP and its partners plan to continue to address these issues in ongoing advocacy.

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