



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. A. Gail Prudenti
Chief Administrative Judge**

**Contact:
David Bookstaver
Communications Director
Arlene Hackel, Deputy Director
(212) 428-2500**

www.nycourts.gov/press

Date: June 10, 2014

Hon. Douglas McKeon Named Coordinating Judge of New York's Medical Malpractice Program

New York – Chief Administrative Judge A. Gail Prudenti today announced the appointment of Hon. Douglas E. McKeon as Coordinating Judge of the New York State Medical Malpractice Program. The appointment, which is effective immediately, was made with the approval of Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman. Judge McKeon succeeds Hon. Ann Pfau, who recently retired following her distinguished 30-year tenure with the New York State court system.

Judge Prudenti said, “Judge McKeon is uniquely qualified to lead the Judiciary’s statewide Medical Malpractice Program, an outgrowth of an inventive court approach to medical malpractice matters he helped pioneer in an effort to more effectively manage these highly complex and difficult cases. Along with his vast expertise in the medical malpractice arena, Judge McKeon brings tremendous vision and leadership skills to this important post. I am delighted that he has so graciously agreed to take on this new role in addition to his current responsibilities as Bronx County’s Administrative Judge for Civil Matters, and look forward to our working together to improve the delivery of justice in this critical area.”

In his new capacity, Judge McKeon will oversee the statewide expansion of the New York State Medical Malpractice Program within the court system. The program originated from a pilot launched in 2002 in Bronx County Supreme Court, developed by Judge McKeon in

conjunction with the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation to address lawsuits against municipal hospitals. The initiative relies on judge-directed negotiations to promote early settlements that limit the heavy legal costs associated with medical malpractice trials and appeals.

Under this model, a designated judge with specialized training handles the entire case through disposition or trial — meeting with both sides at every stage to foster discussion — thereby enabling each party to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the case early on. This non-traditional method was cited by the Obama administration as an innovative way to contain medical costs and liability, with the potential to save the country a billion dollars per year in healthcare costs if adopted by state courts nationwide.

The court system was awarded a federal grant in 2010 to expand the Bronx County Supreme Court pilot, with similar court initiatives now operating in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. Additionally, court parts modeled after the Bronx pilot have been implemented in several counties outside New York City, including in Supreme Court in Westchester, Monroe and Erie counties, the latter supported by a grant from the New York State Health Foundation.

Hon. Douglas McKeon has served as Bronx County's Administrative Judge for Civil Matters since 2011, simultaneously holding the position of the county's Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters from January 2013 to December 2013. He joined the Unified Court System in 1988, upon his election to New York City Civil Court, and was elected to the Supreme Court in Bronx County in 1990. In 2006, he was appointed Presiding Justice of the Appellate Term of the Supreme Court for the First Judicial Department. After earning his Juris Doctor from New York University School of Law, he served as a law clerk to two United States District Court judges for the Southern District of New York. He was in the private practice of law with a specialization in trial and appellate practice, and served as Associate Counsel to the Speaker of the New York Assembly as well as a member of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission. The recipient of numerous honors for his judicial excellence, Judge McKeon has lectured at legal seminars throughout the country and is the author of several articles that have appeared in legal publications.

#