Quiz: Factors Associated with Timely Disposition of Criminal Cases

The following questions are designed to highlight factors and management practices associated with effective court supervision of the criminal case progress and to provide a framework for further discussion.

1. True or False? Judicial involvement in case-progress decisions at the earliest feasible time is a key element of achieving earlier dispositions.

2. Which of the following statistics can most clearly reveal the absence of early, active court management of case progress?
   a. Median age of cases settled.
   b. Number of dispositions per judge.
   c. Age of pending cases.
   d. Median time interval from filing to trial.

3. Which of the following is not a reason for setting deadlines and monitoring each case from filing to disposition:
   a. To encourage timely attorney preparation.
   b. To facilitate early disposition.
   c. To enable the court to know the status of its caseload at all times
   d. To assist in identifying cases in danger of dismissal under speedy trial rules
   e. To provide attorneys flexibility to modify deadlines as long as they mutually agree

4. Which is not a goal of effective judicial caseflow management:
   a. To enhance the quality of litigation.
   b. To assure equal access to the adjudicative process for all litigants.
   c. To allow the prosecutor in criminal cases to decide which cases should proceed
   d. To minimize uncertainties associated with processing cases.
   e. To facilitate early case disposition in appropriate cases.

5. True or False? Lawyers generally do not want the court to play an active role in moving a case from filing to disposition.

6. True or False? In setting deadlines in a case, the court should consult the lawyers.

7. The courtroom clerk should decide continuance requests based on:
   a. Whether the lawyers agree
   b. The order in which requests are received
   c. How far in advance the request is received
   d. This is a trick question; only the judge should rule on continuance requests

8. When lawyers request a continuance (adjournment), the court should consider all the following, except:
   a. Whether good cause is shown for the request
   b. When the need for a continuance became known
   c. Efforts made by counsel to solve the problem and avoid requesting a continuance
   d. The number of years the lawyer has been in practice
9. Beginning when the case is filed and continuing to disposition, cases should always have a future action date assigned.
   a. Always True
   b. True only if one party requests a future action date
   c. Depends on whether the defendant is in custody
   d. False
   d. All of the above

10. True or False? Most cases are disposed of by trial.

11. The timeliness of lawyers’ preparation is conditioned by:
   a. The number of open files in her/his office
   b. The number of years they have been in practice
   c. Their expectation about the court’s intention to enforce deadlines
   d. How long they have known the judge in the case

12. True or False? Case management should be focused primarily on preparing for the trial since trials consume a substantial amount of a judge’s time.

13. Case managers should monitor case progress and the age of pending cases:
   a. When requested by the judge
   b. On a regular basis
   c. When the newspaper calls inquiring about why the courts are so slow
   d. When they have time

14. The most important reason judges and staff need to continuously review the age of their pending inventory is:
   a. To avoid a phone call from the chief justice
   b. To be sure they are not at the bottom of the monthly report
   c. To assure cases are disposed of at the earliest time consistent with their characteristics
   d. To find some easy cases to dispose of

15. Courts should not consult other justice agencies about problems with the caseflow management system because:
   a. Our system of justice requires a clear separation between judges, lawyers and criminal justice agencies
   b. The objectives of these agencies are widely at odds with the court’s objectives
   c. The court is in charge; consultation is a sign of weakness
   d. This is another one of your trick question because on-going consultation between the court and other justice agencies is an element of effective caseflow management!

16. True or False? An effective management information and case tracking system is vital to effective caseflow management.

17. The earlier discovery is exchanged
a. The earlier it is likely the case will be disposed of
b. The earlier the defense lawyer can make a sound recommendation to his/her client
c. The earlier the nature of further proceedings to dispose of the case can be determined
d. The earlier the parties can leave any pretrial conference that is scheduled.

ANSWER KEY
1. True
2. C
3. E
4. C
5. F
6. True
7. D
8. D
9. A
10. False
11. C
12. False
13. B
14. C
15. D
16. True
17. D