



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRIALS OF A FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIST

What happens in court when someone who is mentally ill is charged with a serious offence?

Dr. Elisabeth Zoffmann will discuss a recent criminal case in which she testified as an expert witness and give a brief overview of how the legal system works for those with mental illnesses at the next public education evening, sponsored by the North Shore Schizophrenia Society, on **Wednesday, November 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium at Lions Gate Hospital.**

Dr. Zoffmann's specialty is Forensic Psychiatry: the intersection of mental disorders and laws, rules or regulations.

When a person suffering from a serious mental illness is charged with a crime and their mental status at the time of the offence is in question, specialists like Dr. Zoffmann assist the Court to determine whether or not the accused is criminally responsible for their acts.

In the case of mental illness that leads to a Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder (NCRMD) finding, criminal sanctions do not reduce risk or future harm. Medical treatment does alleviate the potential of recurrent criminal behaviour.

Forensic psychiatrists help ensure the this defence is not abused – so that the people who are found NCRMD are genuinely ill and not simply trying to avoid a prison term or other sanction.

The talk is part of North Shore Schizophrenia Society's long-running series on serious mental illness and related topics. These events are free and open to the public.

- 30 -

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