

## **April 28- Synthetic Drugs- SD1**

### **Combatting the Evolving Problem of Synthetic Drug Abuse in Municipalities**

#### **SPEAKER BIOS**

**Marta Markowska**, Director of Special Projects, Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia (“OAG”)

**Melissa Shear**, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. Ms. Shear is a seasoned prosecutor with over 15 years of experience. In 2001, she began her legal career as an Assistant Corporation Counsel with the New York City Law Department, carrying a felony and misdemeanor caseload of robberies, drug sales and possession, sex abuse offenses, and assaults. As an Assistant Corporation Counsel, Ms. Shear tried over 150 cases. In 2007, Ms. Shear joined the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia as an Assistant Attorney General in the Public Safety Division. In that role, she handled misdemeanor traffic offenses, including impaired and reckless driving cases, driver permit offenses, quality of life offenses, including offenses of indecent exposure, unregistered firearms, and unlawful possession of ammunition. Since 2010, Ms. Shear has served as the District of Columbia’s Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP) and serves as the Public Safety Division’s expert on traffic safety issues. Ms. Shear focuses her work primarily on impaired driving prosecutions by providing training and technical trial support to prosecutors and law enforcement officers. In 2015, Ms. Shear joined OAG’s newly formed Emerging Drug Trends task force. Ms. Shear graduated from Indiana University with a dual Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Criminal Justice, and received her law degree from New York Law School.

**Argatonia Weatherington**, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia. Ms. Weatherington is an Assistant Attorney General in the Neighborhood and Victim Services Section of the Office of Attorney General for the District of Columbia. She joined the Office of the Attorney General in 2013 as a Charles F. Ruff Fellow. During her tenure as a Ruff Fellow, Ms. Weatherington investigated and prosecuted drug, firearm, and prostitution nuisances. In 2014, Ms. Weatherington was hired by the Office as an Assistant Attorney General, and was able to continue her work combatting drug nuisances in the District. As a part of this effort, Ms. Weatherington partnered with a specialized unit within the Metropolitan Police Department to shutdown stores selling New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), which include synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic opioids, and synthetic cathinones. In late 2014, she filed the District of Columbia’s first nuisance case arising from the sale of synthetic cannabinoids. Ms. Weatherington is considered an expert on synthetic cannabinoids in the District, and in 2015, she joined OAG’s newly formed Emerging Drug Trends task force. In March 2016, Ms. Weatherington received the Metropolitan Police Department’s Medal of Merit Award for her dedication to the citizens of the District of Columbia. Ms. Weatherington is a 2012 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center.