

Final

**RHODE ISLAND SUPREME COURT  
ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL  
Opinion No. 99-11, Request No. 781  
Issued May 13, 1999**

Facts:

The inquiring attorney states that a clerk of one of the courts has a medical condition that will require him/her to leave employment for an extended period of time for medical treatment. Co-workers have established a fund to provide financial assistance to the individual and his/her family. The inquiring attorney proposes to set up a similar fund through a local bank and to solicit donations for the individual from other lawyers.

Issue Presented:

The inquiring attorney asks whether it would be appropriate under the Rules of Professional Conduct for an attorney to establish such a fund for a court clerk or alternatively, to contribute to the existing fund established by the clerk's co-workers.

Opinion and Reasoning:

The Panel is of the opinion that the Rules of Professional Conduct do not prohibit the contribution of donations to the existing fund, the establishment of a separate fund, or the solicitation of donations for the clerk for the purpose of providing financial assistance to the clerk during the clerk's period of illness and medical treatment.

The Panel's guidance is restricted to interpretations of the Rules of Professional Conduct and does not extend to issues under the State Ethics Code or any other rules, regulations or laws that may have a bearing on the issues raised by this inquiry.