



This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the nation’s first Drug Court. Problem Solving Courts are now recognized as the most successful criminal justice intervention in our nation’s history. These Courts operate under strict judicial leadership in a non-adversarial setting. We are fortunate in the First Judicial District to have several nationally recognized problem solving courts facilitating community-wide partnerships, bringing together public safety and public health professionals in the fight against substance abuse and criminal behavior.

The month of May marks National Drug Court Month and the First Judicial District recognizes the tremendous team work of Philadelphia’s Drug and DUI Courts, Veterans Treatment Court, Juvenile Drug Court, Project Dawn and Mental Health Court.

The First Judicial District is recognized for remaining at the forefront of problem solving and diversion programs serving thousands of seriously addicted individuals. Drug Courts save money, cut crime and recidivism, are contributing to a reduction in years of escalating prison populations and serve Veterans in need of substance abuse and mental health treatment.

The First Judicial District, in collaboration with the District Attorney, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disabilities, the Defender Association of Philadelphia the Philadelphia Police Department, the Veterans Administration and others, have partnered to provide treatment programs that support individuals throughout the legal process. These programs divert people from jail and support others through the reentry process.

We salute the untiring efforts of our local problem solving court teams and, on a national level, by the untold resources provided by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). The fundamental change, sparked in Miami, Florida, is evident in the way the nation, and Philadelphia, responds when an addict or person dealing with mental health issues is arrested. According to national studies, these Courts have saved over 1.3 million lives and billions of tax dollars, forever changing the

NADCP CEO West Huddleston stated: *“By treating our chronically addicted offenders, we can save vast amounts of money, protect public safety and reduce drug abuse in the community. In order to truly end the cycle of substance abuse and crime, we must put a Drug Court within reach of every eligible American.”*

philosophy of immediate incarceration, proving that treatment does work when accompanied by strict accountability.

PHILADELPHIA'S PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

- **DRUG TREATMENT COURT (Municipal Court)** – The first of its kind in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Treatment Court (established in 1997) addresses the drug-involved, criminal justice adult offender. In dealing with the root causes of criminal activity, this program is designed as an alternative to incarceration and normal criminal case processing. The program requires adherence to court imposed mandates and provides treatment to substance abusing defendants, along with supportive services to fully address the range of treatment, health, housing, literacy, educational and other social service needs. This problem solving court incorporates a dual aim of promoting public safety by reducing a defendant's involvement in crime and of increasing the chances of returning as productive citizens.
- **DUI Court (Municipal Court)** – Philadelphia DUI Treatment Court (DUITC), established in 2007, seeks to reduce impaired driving recidivism through targeting multiple DUI offenders in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia DUITC promotes public safety, holds offenders accountable for their actions, and helps offenders to be sober, responsible and productive members of the community. DUITC accomplishes this mission through judicial intervention, intensive supervision, and substance abuse treatment. Additional goals include: to protect society by removing criminal behavior patterns and return individuals to society as productive citizens, implement a successful program which serves as an alternative to incarceration, encourage involvement in vocational and/or educational endeavors, and maintain a program that is cost effective and technologically advanced.
- **Juvenile Treatment Court (Common Pleas Court, Family Division)** - The Juvenile Treatment Court is a diversion alternative designed to engage non-violent, substance-abusing juvenile offenders in appropriate drug treatment. Under the supervision of the presiding Judge, the Juvenile Drug Court Review Team's work is aimed at motivating and supporting program participants to successfully complete the program. Juvenile Treatment Court identifies and diverts non-violent drug users from prosecution to appropriate drug treatment, and rewards those who successfully complete the program with the dismissal of the charges at the time of graduation. Although some participants will require in-patient treatment, based on a determination of the needed level of care, most of the juveniles are expected to require only outpatient treatment. One year after graduation, the arrest may be expunged from the record of the juvenile, if the offender complies with the program's aftercare requirements, which include remaining crime free and drug free.
- **Mental Health Court (Common Pleas Court, Trial Division)** - The First Judicial District Mental Health Court (FJDMHC) provides an alternative to incarceration, for offenders with mental illness and co-occurring disorders, by preparing individuals for re-entry into more effective treatment modalities in supervised community settings. The FJDMHC aims to reduce the jail population and criminal justice costs by balancing justice, treatment, and public safety. The

program's goals are: 1) to facilitate the re-entry of offenders with mental illness from incarceration into supervised community treatment settings; 2) to provide treatment, housing, benefits, and community support services for defendants with mental illness; 3) to reduce recidivism by defendants with mental illness; 4) to support effective communication between the criminal justice and mental health systems and 5) to preserve public safety.

- **Project Dawn Court (Municipal Court)**– This problem solving initiative commenced to address the growing number of offenders arrested for prostitution who were violating the conditions of their probation and parole due to relapse or recidivism. Municipal Court worked closely with the Commonwealth, Defender Association, Adult Probation and DBHIDS to streamline prostitution cases to centralize treatment, housing and ancillary services. The project includes a component of therapy for survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The Court, like many problem solving courts, operates before a designated Judge with attorneys working in a non-adversarial setting to coordinate services to reduce recidivism & incarceration for non-violent offenders. Project Dawn is committed to providing holistic treatment for offenders so they can break free from the cycle of recidivism and incarceration.
- **Veterans Court (Municipal Court)**- The Philadelphia Veterans Court is providing Veterans with immediate access to representatives from the Veterans Administration (VA) to determine benefits eligibility and to perform an assessment to determine the appropriate needs and levels of care. This assessment determines the Veterans' suitability for an array of VA programs, including any required treatment (alcohol, drug, mental health or medical) as well as housing, job training, job referrals and other ancillary services. We've been fortunate to have Veteran Judges presiding in Veterans Court. The Judicial Branch recognizes the tremendous service Veterans provide to our country, and believes it is the Court's obligation to provide programs and services to overcome challenges that are unique to their experiences. Volunteer Veteran Mentors also engage with the Veteran in working toward a successful resolution of the criminal charges, including a change in life choices, so that future contacts with the criminal justice system are avoided.

Graduation and recognition ceremonies are being conducted throughout the month of May for those offenders who successfully complete all requirements of the various problem solving courts above.

While problem courts are authorized by adhering to the Ten Key Components of a Drug Court as defined by NADCP, building upon the underlying premises established, we continue to expand and implement numerous diversion programs: Accelerated Misdemeanor Program (AMP); Small Amount of Marijuana Program (SAM); Mental Health Initiative; The Choice is Yours (TCY); Domestic Violence; and the Summary Diversion Program.