

COUNTY OF YOLO

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Mental Health Court Ends 2019 on High Note

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Arrests and jail days decreased by nearly 90% for participants

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Mental Health Court team has published its Outcome Measures for fiscal year 2018/19 which show significant reductions in arrests, jail bed days, and hospital bed days of Mental Health Court participants.

Mental Health Court is a minimum 18-month court-based treatment and monitoring system for adult offenders with a serious mental illness. Mental Health Court is designed to increase the treatment engagement of the participants while reducing both arrests, hospitalizations, and jail time both during and after their involvement and participation in the program. The program is a collaborative effort between the Yolo County Superior Court, Probation, Health and Human Services Agency, the Public Defender, and the District Attorney. Mental Health Court follows the Forensic Assertive Community Treatment model where participants get intense services two hours per week or meet with staff four times per week. The team provides participants with wrap-around treatment which includes a focus on mental health, substance abuse, housing, vocational and school, and physical health. The goal is to address the criminogenic factors and reduce recidivism.

Of the 65 individuals assessed during 2018/19, 27 were enrolled in one of the collaborative courts. Twenty-four of those who did not enroll didn't qualify because they didn't suffer from a Serious Mental Illness or they chose not to enroll. For those who enrolled, when comparing the 12 months prior to starting Mental Health Court to the 12 months after Mental Health Court, there was a 89% decrease in arrests, a 90% decrease in jail bed days, a 52% decrease in local hospital bed days, and a 100% decrease in state hospital bed days. "These numbers are astounding," said District Attorney Jeff Reisig. "It shows how dedicated this team is, particularly those providing the services, treatment and supervision. It also shows the hard work being done by the participants."

Currently, there are 17 participants in Mental Health Court. In October, the team received news that the County would receive \$747,280 in funding from the Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance over the next three years to support the expansion of Mental Health Court. The Justice and Mental Health Collaboration grant will double the program's capacity to 30. Funds will support hiring staff to provide services to these additional clients. The Health and Human Services Agency will hire a Clinician and a Peer Support Worker, and the Probation Department will hire a Probation Officer to supervise participants. This grant proposal was prepared through

a collaborative effort by the Yolo County Criminal Justice Grant Writing Team and existing Mental Health Court program staff. The Community Corrections Partnership (CCP) will match the grant funds with an additional \$200,000 to help fund the full cost of the new positions.

In addition, the Collaborative Court Team, which staffs both the Mental Health Court and Addiction Intervention Court programs, was selected to receive Yolo County's SPIRIT Award in the category of Teamwork. The annual SPIRIT Awards recognize outstanding work performed by county staff. The Board of Supervisors presented the award to the Collaborative Court Team at October 22 Board of Supervisors meeting.

December will be a busy month for the Team. On December 2, the Team attended the Woodland Ecumenical and Multi-Faith Ministries (WEMM) monthly meeting and discussed Mental Health and Addiction Intervention Courts. Pastor Larry Love, WEMM Chair, stated, "this was a great presentation and I am so pleased to know this is happening here in Woodland and Yolo County. It's a great idea and should be offered in every county in California. Thank you for doing this." The Team will celebrate at its staff holiday party at Morgan's on Main in Woodland on December 11. On December 20, participants and past graduates will have a holiday party with Team members in the County Atrium in Woodland. Participants are busy rehearsing a comedy skit where they have each been cast in the role of Team members.

Moving into 2020, on January 27-29, members of the Team will be attending a three-day California District Attorneys Association training in San Diego entitled "Navigating the Complexities of Mental Health Cases." The Team was one of three counties selected to present information on its successful Mental Health Court model to those attending the training from District Attorneys' offices throughout California. Finally, on March 11-13, Team members will travel to Monterey to attend the 45th annual Forensic Mental Health Association of California Conference where they have been asked for the second successive year to present, this year on how to build a successful Mental Health Court. Lastly, in early 2020 the Team looks forward to three graduations. The graduations are powerful and transformative events and members of the public are encouraged to attend.

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Attachment: Photos of Mental Health Court Statistics Fiscal Year 18-19



