



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Gerardo Pinedo
County Administrative Officer

625 Court Street, Room 202 • Woodland, CA 95695
www.YoloCounty.org

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Contact: Dwight Coddington

Email: PIO@YoloCounty.org

Phone: (530) 908-0186

Yolo County Celebrates Success of Mental Health Diversion and Collaborative Court Programs

(Woodland, CA) –Yolo County and its partners are coming together this holiday season to host celebrations of the remarkable achievements of the Mental Health Diversion (MH-Div), Mental Health Court (MHC), and Addiction Intervention Court (AIC) programs. These innovative initiatives, designed to address the needs of community members within the criminal justice system and grappling with mental health or substance use disorders, have demonstrated significant positive outcomes. Recent data highlights reductions in arrests, jail bed stays, local hospital bed stays, and Department of State Hospitals bed days as a result of these programs. Those who have successfully completed one of these programs have attributed their personal growth, improved well-being, and the restoration of their relationships to these interventions.

For over a decade, multiple Yolo County partners, including Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Raven, have dedicated their efforts to individuals whose serious mental health or substance use disorders contributed to their commission of criminal offenses. With a focus on reducing future involvement with the criminal justice system, and improving personal and community health outcomes, Raven, who recently announced his retirement from Yolo County, remains committed to advocating for similar programs statewide.

"As he retires from service in Yolo County, Jonathan Raven's fingerprints will be left on every modern mental health diversion and collaborative court program currently in use in the local criminal justice system," said Yolo County District Attorney Jeff Reisig. "His passion and commitment to this important work has been invaluable."

Launched in January and funded by the Yolo County Community Corrections Partnership (CCP), the Mental Health Diversion program (MH-Div) is a collaborative effort involving the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Probation Department, Sheriff's Office, the Yolo County Superior Court, and CommuniCare+OLE. Operating on a minimum 1-year court-based treatment and monitoring system, the program provides individualized treatment plans focusing on physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The MH-Div program, which is currently at capacity with plans to expand, has already supported 38 individuals with their treatment needs. 13 individuals have successfully completed outpatient substance use disorder treatment and an additional 4 have completed residential treatment. Representatives from the Public Defender's Office praised the graduates and the program's commitment to supporting individuals on their path to healing and flourishing in society.

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Yolo County Public Defender Tracie Olson stated, "Jonathan Raven's influence in these collaborative programs will be missed. The success of MH-Div, MHC and AIC is a testament to the human capacity to rehabilitate and these programs would not exist without his vision and support."

"Congratulations to Jonathan Raven on his retirement. Throughout his career in Yolo County, Jonathan has distinguished himself as an outstanding leader," said Yolo County's Chief Administrative Officer Gerardo Pinedo. "Among his many accomplishments, Jonathan has supported the District Attorney in creating an environment that fosters diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization. While we will miss Jonathan at the District Attorney's Office, we are excited to see him take on his new statewide leadership role where he will continue to promote excellence in our criminal justice system."

Mental Health Court (MHC) and Addiction Intervention Court (AIC) are specialized 18-month collaborative court programs for adults whose commission of an offence was the result of their mental health or substance use disorder. Developed by the Court, Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, Probation Department, and Health and Human Services Agency, MHC provides intensive mental health services, and AIC addresses substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders. Both programs have led to decreases in arrests and jail bed days.

MHC was established to address the increasing number of mentally ill defendants cycling through the courts and jails. It follows the Forensic Assertive Community Treatment model where participants get individualized weekly intensive services. The team provides participants with wrap-around treatment which includes a focus on mental health, substance abuse, housing, vocational training and education, and overall wellness.

AIC was established as a proactive response to substance use disorder among the community, and it guides participants through four phases emphasizing rewards and a restorative justice component in the last phase where participants spend 4-6 weeks recounting their crime and its circumstances, acknowledging harm caused, and working towards healing. Graduation criteria ensure sustained progress, requiring participants to engage for a minimum of 18 months, maintain sobriety, secure employment, and participate in restorative justice processes.

Yolo County remains committed to supporting individuals on their journey to recovery and community reintegration, emphasizing a holistic approach to rehabilitation. For more information about the MH-Div, MHC and AIC programs, please visit www.YoloCounty.org/CCP and www.YoloDA.org.

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