



June 20, 2012

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PRESS ADVISORY

Mental Health Community Court to Celebrate 5 Years of Success

-- Program has served 1600 defendants --

WHAT: Mental Health Community Court Ceremony

WHERE: Moultrie Courthouse, courtroom 211
500 Indiana Avenue, NW

WHEN: Thursday, June 21, 2012, 4:00pm

WHO: Chief Judge Lee Satterfield, DC Superior Court
Judge Russell Canan, Presiding Judge, Criminal Division
Judge Linda Davis, Superior Court, *Mistress of Ceremony*
Ron Machen, US Attorney for the District of Columbia
Steve Baron, Director, DC Department of Mental Health

The Mental Health Community Court (MHCC) is celebrating five years of service to defendants in need of mental health services. The ceremony will include a video presentation which explores the different paths and perspectives of the MHCC. Awards will be presented to individuals who have helped make MHCC a success over the years.

The Mental Health Community Court of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia (MHCC) began hearing cases in November of 2007 to address the needs of an increasing number of mentally ill defendants charged with misdemeanors. In October 2010 MHCC also began hearing non-violent felony cases. The main objective has been to identify defendants experiencing a mental illness, including some defendants with co-occurring substance abuse disorders and to connect defendants with appropriate treatment services. If compliance with these services is maintained, as well as the other conditions set by the court, the criminal charges may be dismissed or reduced. MHCC is a voluntary program.

MHCC program goals:

- Reduce crime in the community and protect public safety by reducing the re-arrest rates of mentally ill defendants;
- Reduce the rate of jail detention and involuntary forensic hospitalization for program participants, thus reducing overall costs in the criminal justice system;
- Reduce the criminal justice involvement of program participants;
- Improve the mental health of program participants by connecting them with appropriate services in the community and monitoring their progress in the program; and
- Increase treatment engagement on the part of program participants.

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For more information on MHCC, see www.dccourts.gov/internet/public/aud_criminal/problemsolvingcourts.jsf.

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