



news

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6th Judicial District Behavioral Health Court to mark second anniversary

DURANGO – The Behavioral Health Court in the Sixth Judicial District (Archuleta, La Plata and San Juan counties) celebrates its second anniversary next week, with the occasion marked by dessert for the Behavioral Health Court team and clients prepared by presiding Judge Martha Tinsley Minot.

The problem-solving Behavioral Health Court started in April 2011 in an effort to reduce recidivism among offenders with mental illness and provide community protection with a cost-effective, integrated continuum of care through the development and use of community resources. Offenders are held accountable while receiving help to achieve long-term stability to become successful family and community members.

“The clients in Behavioral Health Court work hard to regain their stability and are generally so appreciative of the support they are provided,” Judge Minot said. “It’s truly a team effort to ensure clients receive support to attend treatment, take their medications properly and avoid getting into any new trouble. It continues to be a pleasure working with committed members of the community assisting others in this way.”

There are 11 participants in the court, which celebrated its first two graduates in February. The second-anniversary celebration is scheduled for April 16, 2013.

The court recently added a fourth phase to its program, in which clients present relapse-prevention, support and goal-achievement plans to the court team. Four clients are currently in Phase 4.

Behavioral Health Court team members include Judge Minot, representatives from the offices of the district attorney and public defender; private counsel; treatment and mental health care providers such as Axis Mental Health, Riversage Counseling, Harmony Counseling and Preferred Counseling; the La Plata County Sheriff's Department; the Sixth Judicial District Probation Department; the useful public service coordinator; and the problem-solving courts coordinator.

The court uses best-practice methods of treatment, motivational interviewing techniques, sanctions and incentives, and a team-oriented interventional approach to address the individual circumstances and needs of each participant.

The Behavioral Health Court is one of more than 70 problem-solving courts operating in 17 of Colorado's 22 judicial districts. Colorado's problem-solving courts include adult and juvenile drug courts, family/dependency and neglect drug courts, DUI courts, adult and juvenile mental health courts, veteran trauma courts and truancy courts.