



# news

Colorado Judicial Branch  
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## **Second class set to graduate from 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Mental Health Court** *Chief Justice Michael L. Bender to attend ceremony*

CENTENNIAL, Colo. – The nearly three-year-old 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Mental Health Court will graduate its second class of participants on Friday, Sept. 14, 2012, when two participants are scheduled to complete the program. The Court’s first graduation celebration was held in April 2012 when four participants completed the program.

There are currently more than 35 participants in the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Mental Health Court. The graduating participants have been in the program for 20 to 24 months. Magistrate Bonnie McLean presides over the Court’s docket.

“The 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Mental Health Court continues to make great strides in providing a variety of treatment options to those with mental health needs,” said 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Chief Judge William B. Sylvester. “I continue to be impressed with the innovative and valuable work being done by our judicial officers, court staff and the participants.”

In addition to the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, the Mental Health Court is supported by the district attorney’s office, public defender’s office, probation department and Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health Network (ADMHN).

Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael L. Bender is slated to attend the graduation ceremony and has long supported Colorado’s problem-solving courts.

“Problem-solving courts, such as the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District’s mental health court, provide a tailored approach to assessing people’s needs and providing them with the treatment options necessary to get back on track,” Chief Justice Bender said. “I commend the 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District and others involved in this program for their commitment to the participants and community.”

The graduation celebration is scheduled to begin at 11 a.m., following the Court's regular 9:30 a.m. docket in courthouse one, courtroom 201 of the Arapahoe County Justice Center (7325 S. Potomac Street, Centennial, CO 80112). The Court's docket and graduation celebration are open to the public. Following the graduation, refreshments will be served in the jury assembly room.

The mission of the Mental Health Court is to reduce recidivism of offenders with mental illness in the criminal justice system, promote public safety and improve quality of life for participants and their families with a cost effective, integrated continuum of care through community resources. The Mental Health Court holds defendants accountable and assists offenders to achieve long-term stability to become law-abiding citizens, and successful family and community members.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Mental 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, a veteran trauma court and truancy courts.

**Editor's Note:** Chief Judge Sylvester has entered an order allowing for Expanded Media Coverage of the Mental Health Court's docket and graduation celebration. EMC pooling arrangements apply. Interviews with the graduates will be arranged following the ceremony.