



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
Michael L. Bender, Chief Justice
Gerald Marroney, State Court Administrator

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 11, 2012

Contact: Robert McCallum or Jon Sarché
303-837-3633
303-837-3644

robert.mccallum@judicial.state.co.us
jon.sarche@judicial.state.co.us

First class set to graduate from 18th Judicial District Mental Health Court

CENTENNIAL, Colo. – The two-and-a-half-year-old 18th Judicial District Mental Health Court marks a milestone on Friday, April 13, when four participants are scheduled to graduate from the program.

There are currently more than 40 participants in the 18th Judicial District Mental Health Court. This is the first class of participants to graduate since the Court's inception. The graduating participants have been in the program for 20 to 24 months. Magistrate Laura Findorff presides over the Court's docket.

“The 18th Judicial District is very proud of this Court and the hard work put forth by Magistrate Laura Findorff and all of the participants,” said 18th Judicial District Chief Judge William B. Sylvester. “This graduation is the first of many to come as we are dedicated to this problem-solving approach and providing a variety of treatment options to those with mental health needs.”

In addition to the 18th 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, who is slated to attend the graduation ceremony, lauded the Court for its progress.

“In just a very short amount of time this Court has made great strides in offering a comprehensive and collaborative treatment approach,” Chief Justice Bender said. “I am hopeful we will see more courts of this nature take form throughout Colorado.”

The graduation celebration is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m., following the Court's regular 9 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 18th Judicial District Mental Health Court is one of more than 60 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 (two still photographers and two videographers, no audio). Interviews with the graduates will be arranged following the ceremony.