



news

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

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

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

Third class set to graduate from 18th Judicial District Wellness Court

CENTENNIAL, Colo. – The three-year-old 18th Judicial District Wellness Court will graduate its third class of participants on Thursday, February 7, 2013, when five participants are scheduled to complete the program.

There are currently more than 40 participants in the 18th Judicial District Wellness Court. The graduates have participated in intense supervision, treatment and judicial oversight for over 20 months. Magistrate Bonnie McLean presides over the Wellness Court (Mental Health Court) and Recovery Court (Drug Court).

The Wellness Court has saved the Arapahoe County Jail an estimated \$444,000, based on the court's current clients, by enrolling participants who otherwise would have stayed in jail. Additionally, more than half of the Wellness Court's participants have suspended prison sentences. If each of the current clients successfully completes the program, it is estimated the Wellness Court will have saved the state \$3.5 million (when accounting for potential parole and prison-term reductions due to good time).

“The 18th Judicial District Wellness Court – as well as other problem-solving courts in this district and elsewhere – continue to prove themselves a vitally important part of our criminal justice system, said 18th Judicial District Chief Judge William B. Sylvester. “These courts have made great strides in providing a variety of treatment options to those with mental health needs, sometimes options that would not have been available in prison.”

In addition to the 18th Judicial District, the Wellness Court is supported by the district attorney's office, public defender's office, probation department, Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department and Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health Network (ADMHN).

“I feel honored every day to be part of a group of dedicated professionals who make this program work so well,” said Arapahoe County Magistrate Bonnie McLean, who presides over the Wellness Court. “It is extremely gratifying to see people who were struggling with mental health and legal issues graduate from this program with the promise of returning to their communities and families with a new vision for their lives and new tools to help themselves succeed.”

The graduation celebration is scheduled to begin at 3:30pm., following the Court’s regular 2:30 p.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 Wellness 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 Wellness 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 Wellness 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.