



May 7, 2025

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pennsylvania Courts Celebrate National Treatment Court Month; Announce New Certification Program

HARRISBURG — Recognizing May as National Treatment Court Month, the Pennsylvania Courts today joined with legislators, community partners, treatment court professionals and treatment court program staff and participants from across Pennsylvania to celebrate the success of Pennsylvania’s treatment court program.

Standing inside the Supreme Court Courtroom, Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice P. Kevin Brobson, on behalf of the courts, noted that “treatment courts are built on a simple, yet powerful idea – that we cannot incarcerate our way out of addiction, mental illness or trauma.

“These courts are a critical part of the judicial system, and recognize that for many people, the underlying criminal intent is inextricably intertwined with other challenges, all which call for both accountability and treatment.

“By combining accountability with compassion, treatment courts are changing and saving lives while strengthening communities in the process.”

To further support Pennsylvania’s treatment court programs and participants, Justice Brobson also announced the launch of a certification program for treatment courts statewide.

“As a sign of our continued commitment to these critical programs, Pennsylvania is embarking on a certification process for its treatment courts – one that will promote effective, evidence-based practices, ensure consistent, high-quality services are available to participants which will in turn, increase positive outcomes,” Brobson said.

“Certification is yet another way for the courts to further invest in the success of these programs and the futures of our participants.”

Across Pennsylvania, treatment court programs offer resources to help eligible participants and court staff to open doors to treatment and rehabilitation as they prepare to return to the community. Each of these courts aim to link participants to employment, housing, treatment, and other support services.

Within the treatment court system, critical focus is placed on treatment to facilitate change, rather than incarceration supported by a heightened level of judicial involvement and intensive adult probation supervision along with the appropriate treatment and ancillary services.

Pennsylvania's first drug court opened in Philadelphia in 1997. Since that time, the treatment court movement in the commonwealth has expanded to include, among others, driving under the influence courts, juvenile drug courts, veterans courts and mental health courts.

Currently more than 137 treatment courts are operational across the state, assisting those with substance use disorders, mental health disorders, and co-occurring disorders reach and maintain a recovery-oriented lifestyle, thereby increasing recovery capital in their communities.

Pennsylvania has forged new ground and established itself as a leader among states by forming key partnerships and investing in treatment court teams and participants.

Established in 1999, the Pennsylvania Association of Treatment Court Professionals (PATCP) works to advocate for the establishment of Treatment Courts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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