

History / Overview

The Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (MHDD) Court was established on June 9, 2003 as a response to the increasing number of offenders with serious mental health illness who were entering the criminal justice system. The MHDD Court was created through amendments to local rules .

The MHDD Court is funded by the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court and supported by local, state, and federal funding entities, especially the Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board and the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities (CCBDD).

The MHDD Court was established with the intent to operate with a high level of collaboration among court personnel, criminal justice entities, and community partners. From arrest to disposition and community control, many specialized services have been developed for offenders with mental health illness and or developmental disabilities.

Today, the MHDD Court has five Judges, who on a voluntary basis oversee the Court, along with a court and probation coordinator, two probation supervisors, two pretrial officers, and thirteen post-conviction probation officers.

The collaborative effort between the courts and community agencies has helped to provide improved care for the MHDD offenders while promoting safety for the community through therapeutic approaches and evidence-based practices.

Advisory Committee

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Administration,
Presiding Judge and MHDD Judges

Cuyahoga County Administration

Cuyahoga County Adult Probation
Department

Cuyahoga County Corrections Planning Board

Cuyahoga County Court Psychiatric Clinic

Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office

Cuyahoga County Public Defender's Office

Cuyahoga County Sheriff Office

Cuyahoga County Correction Center
Psychiatric Unit

North Coast Behavioral Healthcare

Alcohol, Drug, Addiction, and Mental Health Services
(ADAMHS) Board

Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Cleveland Police Department

Cuyahoga Criminal Defense Lawyers Association

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Cuyahoga County Common Pleas

Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Court

The mission of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Court is to promote early identification of defendants with severe mental health and/or developmental disabilities in order to promote coordination and cooperation among law enforcement, jails, community treatment providers, attorneys and the courts for defendants during the legal process and achieve outcomes that both protect society and support the mental health care and disability needs of the defendant.

.....**NO Wrong Door**

Program Highlights

- ◆ *The MHDD Court has a “No Wrong Door” policy. Defendants identified with suspected mental health issues or developmental disabilities can be referred for eligibility determination and possible transfer to the MHDD Court, regardless of criminal history or current alleged offense and at any stage of proceedings.*
- ◆ *To indicate the presence of MHDD issues, the cases of individuals have been flagged in the Court’s information system allowing for expedient identification and linkage to services.*
- ◆ *With the assistance of the ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County, Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, and the county jail, liaisons are located on site to provide evaluations and recommendations to the Court and Probation Department.*
- ◆ *Offenders have access to the jail psychiatric unit and NorthCoast Behavioral Healthcare for stabilization.*
- ◆ *Attorneys are certified to represent MHDD offenders by attending a MHDD seminar providing an overview of mental illness and developmental disabilities, MHDD Probation, the Court Psychiatric Clinic, and forensic monitoring.*
- ◆ *Highly trained team members create the MHDD Court. The team collaborates closely with the ADAMHS Board, several community mental health agencies, Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, jail, hospitals, and treatment centers to provide comprehensive supervision.*
- ◆ *Specialized judicial practices are incorporated to appropriately address the MHDD population. Judges have bi-weekly staffing hearings with the team members to address offenders’ progress or issues. The paramount concerns are ensuring community safety and effective supervision of defendants in the community.*

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Court, an offender must meet the following criteria per the diagnosis of a mental health professional.

- ◆ **Suffer from a severe mental health issues with psychosis, such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, major depressive disorder with psychotic features, or bipolar disorder with psychotic features.**

OR

- ◆ **Suffer from a developmental disability with an IQ of 75 or below and/or an adaptive skills deficit based on a diagnostic report.**

Authority and Attorney Assignment

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court created the MHDD Court through amendments to Local Rules 30, 30.1, and 33.

Rules and approved MHDD attorney assignment list may be accessed through the Court’s website at :

<http://cp.cuyahogacounty.us/internet/index.aspx>

Referral Process

Defendants may be identified for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (MHDD) Court eligibility determination through any of the following means:

- ◆ **Municipal Court Bind Over:** Municipal Court may determine eligibility through liaisons. The information is forwarded to Common Pleas Court for MHDD judge assignment.
- ◆ **Attorney Referral:** Attorney with access to diagnostic information on client forwards referral to MHDD Court for possible assignment. Family members may be helpful in obtaining this information.
- ◆ **Bond Investigation:** Bond Investigator refers case for assessment and determination utilizing community MHDD information.
- ◆ **Community Behavioral Health Liaisons:** Liaisons determine via diagnostic information that defendant meets eligibility standards and refer case for possible MHDD Court assignment.
- ◆ **Jail:** Jail behavioral health unit diagnoses defendants in custody of the County Jail and refers for possible MHDD Court assignment.
- ◆ **Court Psychiatric Clinic:** A Common Pleas Judge or Probation Officer may refer to Court Psychiatric Clinic for evaluation.