

History / Overview

Increasingly, more and more inmates' in the nation's jail and prison systems are mentally ill. Jails and prisons have become the institutions of the last resort for the mentally ill.

Development of the Mental Health Court Docket became a critical collaborative initiative between the criminal justice and the mental health treatment systems.

In 2002, the Court of Common Pleas along with Suburban Court partners developed the Mental Health Court Docket model for presentation and ultimate acceptance at the Eighth District Judicial Conference.

The focus of this collaboration is to identify existing programs and services that serve these populations; to identify the gaps in services, and expand resources; to enhance communication and training which ultimately provides an efficient, effective and consistent criminal response.

The objectives of the collaboration are early identification and linkages to treatment services for offenders with mental illness or those offenders that are developmentally disabled. Services include screening, assessment and sentencing responses, assertive community treatment, and crisis intervention teams.

Stakeholders

Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services Board ...
Case Western Reserve University ... Center for
Mental Retardation ... City of Cleveland ...
Cleveland Municipal Court ... Cleveland
Municipal Court Psychiatric Clinic ... Cleveland
Police Department ... Cuyahoga Community
Mental Health Board ... Cuyahoga County Adult
Probation & Pretrial Services ... Cuyahoga
County Board of Mental Retardation and
Development Disabilities ... Cuyahoga County
Corrections Planning Board...Cuyahoga County
Corrections Center ...Cuyahoga County Court
of Common Pleas ... Cuyahoga County Court
Psychiatric Clinic ... Cuyahoga County
Prosecutors Office ... Cuyahoga County Public
Defenders Office ... Cuyahoga County
Department of Justice Affairs ... Cuyahoga
County Suburban Municipal Courts ... Legal Aid
Society of Cleveland ... Mental Health Services
... NAMI Greater Cleveland... NorthCoast
Behavioral Healthcare ... Positive Education
Program ... Private Defense Attorneys ...
Recovery Resources ... The Cuyahoga County
Bar Association ... U.S. Secret Service.

For more information contact:

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Cuyahoga County

Mental Health Court Initiative

*The **GOAL** of the Mental Health Court Initiative is early identification of the **MENTALLY DISORDERED OR DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED** offender and linkages to treatment. Access to this program can occur at any point in the criminal justice continuum.*

... No Wrong Door

Program highlights

- **Mental Health Liaisons provide recommendations** to assist the Suburban Courts and Police Departments with the mentally ill and developmentally disabled offender.
- **Mental Health Liaisons visit the jails** within 24 hours to provide evaluations and recommendations to the Police and Courts.
- **Access to the jails psychiatric ward** and NorthCoast Behavioral Healthcare for stabilization.
- **Attorney consistency**; an attorney appointed to defend the offender in the suburban courts is the same attorney who represents the offender at the Common Pleas felony level.
- **The County Prosecutor and Public Defenders office have a designated point person** for the Mental Health Court Docket.
- **Specialized training for all individuals who interact with the offender**; Judges, Attorneys, Police Officers, Probation Officers, etc.
- **Improved and enhanced communication** with the County Mental Health Board, Associated Boards **and linkages to appropriate resources.**
- **Specialized judicial practices** to address the mentally ill offender.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Mental Health Court Docket, clients must meet the following criteria per the diagnosis of a mental health professional.

1. **A defendant is deemed to have a confirmed serious mental illness if within the previous six months, prior to arraignment, there is a clinical diagnosis of severe mental illness with a psychotic feature.**

This includes schizophrenia, schizoaffective, and other psychotic disorders. Clients diagnosed as having a mental disorder other than psychosis are ineligible for the clinical components but may be eligible and supervised by the probation component.

2. **A defendant is deemed to be eligible if there is a clinical diagnosis that the defendant meets current Developmentally Disabled Offender eligibility of an IQ of 75 or less and/or an adaptive skills deficit.**

AUTHORITY AND ATTORNEY ASSIGNMENT -

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court created the Mental Health Court Docket (MHCD) through amendments to Local Rules 30, 30.1, and 33.

Rules and approved MHCD attorneys assignment list may be accessed through the Court's Web site at www.cuyahoga.oh.us/common/default.htm.

Referral Process

Defendants may be identified for Mental Health Docket eligibility determination through any of the following means:

Suburban Court Bind Over – Suburban Municipal Court eligibility determination by the Mental Health Liaisons; cases bound over on a “docket five” case form for continuation of mental health attorney assignment and mental health docket assignment.

Attorney Referral – Attorney with access to diagnostic information on client forwards referral to Pretrial Services for eligibility determination process.

Bond Investigation – Bond Investigator refers case for assessment and determination utilizing community mental health information.

Mental Health Liaisons – Mental Health Liaisons determine via diagnostic information that defendants meet eligibility standards and refer case to Pretrial Services for Mental Health Court Docket assignment.

Jail – Jail psychiatrists' diagnoses defendant in custody of the County Jail and the jail staff refers to Pretrial Services for consideration to the Mental Health Court Docket assignment.