Guidelines for Admission

1) The Referral: When a potential participant has been charged with a criminal offense and appears to have a mental illness that has been a factor in the alleged offense, any of the following sources may make a referral: Judges, Attorney, Western Montana Mental Health Center (WMMHC) personnel, Family Members, Detention Staff, Hospital Staff, therapists etc... ***(Note that a referral does not assure automatic acceptance into the program.)***

2) Prosecuting Attorney: The Prosecuting Attorney will be notified and consent will be requested for screening.

3) Defense Attorney: The Defense Attorney also must consent to the Mental Health Court Docket screening to initiate contact with the potential participant to determine eligibility for the program.

4) Screening: Mental Health Court Docket Coordinator contacts the potential participant, at times in the detention center: (a) To assess willingness to participate into the program; (b) To perform eligibility screening; (d) To complete all necessary paperwork, releases of information, assessments, etc.

5) Intake Procedure: If eligibility criteria are met, Mental Health Court Docket Coordinator meets with client again to: (a) complete all necessary forms; (b) arrange for necessary evaluations; (c) obtain pertinent records; (d) develop a preliminary treatment plan.

6) Acceptance or Denial in Program: Once the intake is completed, information is forwarded to both attorneys for review and the team discusses the case and determines acceptance to the program.

7) Acceptance: The completed file is forwarded to the Judge and a formal hearing is scheduled for the Mental Health Court Docket to review and complete the participant contract. The Judge welcomes client to Program and apprises client of his/her responsibilities.

Missoula's Mental Health Court Program

TOGETHER WE CAN ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS

For Information Contact:

Theresa Conley
Mental Health Court Coordinator
Missoula County Courthouse
200 West Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

Phone: 406-258-4641
Fax: 406-258-3940
Email: TConley@mt.gov

JUDICIARY
Exhibit No. 12
Date 2-6-09
Bill No. SB 382

What is Mental Health Court?

The Missoula Mental Health Court Program was developed to improve the response of the Missoula County criminal justice system to people with mental illness. A mental health court is designed to divert people with serious mental illness charged with misdemeanors and non-violent felonies into treatment.

All agencies involved concur that a more effective approach must be developed to provide persons with a mental illness charged with criminal offenses the continuity of services needed to gain stabilization and reduce involvement in the criminal justice system. The U.S. Department of Justice provided funding for the program. Grant No. 2003 DDBX0208.

The Missoula Mental Health Court Program strives to improve public safety and deal humanely with people who have mental illness who enter the criminal justice system. Program staff are committed to allocating resources, training, and expertise to address the unique needs of persons with serious mental illness charged with criminal offenses.

Common Elements of Mental Health Courts

- Participation is voluntary.
- Participants have a demonstrable mental illness or co-occurring disorder to which their involvement in the criminal justice system can be attributed.
- A key objective is either to prevent the jailing of persons with mental illness charged with criminal offenses or to secure their release from jail for appropriate community services.
- Public safety is a high priority and participants are carefully screened prior to admission.
- Early intervention is essential, with screening and referral occurring immediately after arrest or as soon thereafter as possible.
- Intensive case management includes supervision of participants with a focus on accountability and monitoring of the participant's performance.
- Working with a team, the Judge is the center of the treatment and supervision process.

Why Participate?

- If you (or a family member) have been charged with a crime and have been diagnosed with a mental illness, you may be eligible for Mental Health Court.
- Participants, if they successfully complete the program, may have the opportunity to get a lesser sentence or remain in the community.
- Participants receive help in obtaining services such as housing, job training and medical care.

For more details about the benefits of participation, consult Theresa Conley, or consult with your attorney.