



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Report: More Jobs, Fewer Offenses among Graduates of Michigan Problem-Solving Courts

LANSING, MI, May 8, 2017 – The Michigan Supreme Court today announced the latest “[Solving Problems, Saving Lives](#)” report and Problem-Solving Court Success Stories at a graduation of the 17th District Court Veterans Treatment Court in Redford Township. The report shows lower rates of recidivism and unemployment for graduates of drug, sobriety, and mental health courts in Michigan.

“Unlike traditional courts, problem-solving courts take a team approach that brings community members together to reach a ‘win-win’ outcome that prevents further offenses and saves local governments the cost of incarceration,” said Michigan Supreme Court Justice David F. Viviano. “These courts help graduates get back to work, back to their families, and back to a better quality of life.”

Judge Karen Khalil presides over the 17th District Court Veterans Treatment Court in Redford Township, where today’s event took place to honor the court’s nine newest graduates. “I am inspired by the stories of these veterans—what they’ve gone through—and also by seeing what they can accomplish when given structure and an opportunity to bounce back,” she said.

Key findings in the [Solving Problems, Saving Lives](#) report include:

- Drug and sobriety court graduates were nearly two times less likely to reoffend after two years.
- Mental health court graduates were more than two times less likely to reoffend after two years.
- Unemployment among adult drug court graduates dropped by more than half.
- Unemployment among veterans treatment court graduates was cut by two-thirds.
- Ninety-seven percent of mental health court graduates reported both improved mental health and improved quality of life.
- Ninety-two percent of sobriety court participants who used an ignition interlock device successfully completed a program.
- Sobriety court graduates with interlock devices were three times less likely to be convicted of another offense after four years.

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“Troubled individuals suffering from mental illness who come into contact with the criminal justice system account for a startling number of prison inmates. But mental health courts are working to change this by offering alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders – and they are succeeding,” said Judge Laura Redmond Mack, who presides over the Western Wayne Regional Behavioral Health Court. In order to expand the reach of treatment courts, Judge Mack runs the regional court out of the 29th District Court in the City of Wayne.

The Supreme Court today also released a companion report called [Problem-Solving Court Success Stories](#), which features four graduates and the four judges who helped them. “These stories spotlight some of the people who have changed their lives in these important programs,” said Justice Viviano.

Problem-solving courts improve outcomes for offenders by diverting participants into special programs that provide the treatment and strict supervision offenders need to stay out of trouble and lead productive lives. Avoiding incarceration also generates substantial savings for taxpayers, and participants improve their employment status and overall quality of life. Michigan’s 185 problem-solving courts provide access to 97 percent of the state’s population, and Michigan is a national leader with 25 veterans treatment courts.

SCAO compiled data between October 1, 2014, and September 30, 2016, in “[Solving Problems, Saving Lives](#).”

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