



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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Michigan Leads Nation in Veterans Treatment Courts

LANSING MI, November 10, 2014 – On the eve of Veterans Day, Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. kicked off a special event at the Michigan Hall of Justice, welcoming attendees at the Veterans Treatment Court Forum. Since 2012, the number of veterans treatment courts has more than tripled – from 6 to 20 – and Michigan has more of these problem-solving courts than any other state.

Attendees at the forum included judges, administrators, veteran mentors, and veteran graduates of this successful initiative that helps veterans turn their lives around and avoid costly incarceration. The program is part of a broader Supreme Court strategy to help local trial courts implement best practices that improve outcomes and service to the public.

“Veterans treatment courts are growing because they are working,” said Chief Justice Young. “Today, we are seeing firsthand that this initiative is saving lives and strengthening communities by helping veterans rebuild productive lives with their families.”

“Military veterans accused of crimes often present unique issues related to their military service. The veterans treatment court is able to bring a variety of resources to the issues presented by the veteran charged with a crime, and more often than not is able to redirect the veteran into the adoption of a positive lifestyle,” said 54-B District Judge Richard Ball, who presides over the Ingham County Veterans Treatment Court.

The Veterans Treatment Court Forum was hosted by the Supreme Court to recognize and share the accomplishments of these courts and their efforts to help Michigan veterans access needed treatment. The forum held open dialogue workshops to discuss topics such as suicide prevention, online veterans assistance programs, and recruiting local mentors who are vital to success of each veteran.

Michigan’s veterans treatment courts combine drug court and mental health court principles to serve military veterans as well as active-duty personnel. They promote sobriety, recovery, and stability by offering alternatives to incarceration. Michigan has 174 problem-solving courts that reach 97 percent of the state population.

The veterans treatment courts efforts are strengthened by the support of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare networks, Veterans Benefits Administration, the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, volunteer mentors, and organizations that support veterans and their families.

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