



2nd Circuit- District Division- Lebanon

Mental Health Court Program

Participant Handbook

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2nd Circuit- District Division- Lebanon **Halls of Hope**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Halls of Hope Program seeks to provide an effective and meaningful alternative to the traditional criminal justice system for individuals with a mental illness. Our goal is to promote prompt intervention, education, treatment and recovery in order to improve the quality of the individual's life, reduce recidivism and improve community safety.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Halls of Hope is an intensive and comprehensive mental health court program designed as an alternative to incarceration. The Program strives to hold its participants accountable for their behavior while also holding the community accountable for quality care of the individual.

The Halls of Hope Program is guided by the following principles:

- 1) Maximize the communication and cooperation between the mental health system and the criminal justice system;
- 2) Improve access to community mental health services;
- 3) Expedite case processing time with a team approach;
- 4) Reduce recidivism;
- 5) Better protect the safety and well-being of the community;
- 6) Improve appropriate treatment for identified defendants;
- 7) Ensure that consequences for non-compliance with the treatment plan be swift and graduated to fit the circumstances;

- 8) Incorporate community-based educational, vocational, counseling and self-help courses and programs into a comprehensive treatment plan of self-improvement; and
- 9) Allow family members and others responsible for the care of the participant to become involved in the treatment and recovery process under the appropriate circumstances.

An individual may be referred for admission in to the Program as part of the disposition of any criminal matter. The applicant will be assessed by a clinician in the areas of psychological issues, substance abuse, education, life skills and vocational skills. If determined eligible for the Program, the applicant may then undergo further assessment(s) as deemed appropriate and a Treatment Plan will be developed by the Case Manager with input from the applicant and any evaluators. The Treatment Plan will be reviewed and signed by the applicant and his/her counsel. If the individual does not agree to the Treatment Plan, then he or she may not qualify for Halls of Hope.

In situations where there is co-occurring substance abuse, the Treatment Plan will include a substance abuse component that may require the participant to undergo an evaluation by a LADAC and comply with recommendations.

Treatment will be monitored by the Case Manager in order to make sure the participant is complying with the Treatment Plan. Participants must authorize any treatment providers, including doctors and counselors, to disclose to the Case Manager any noncompliance with the Treatment Plan such as missed appointments, substance abuse or failure to take medications as prescribed. The purpose of these disclosures is to quickly detect any noncompliance and address the situation promptly and effectively.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

What is the Halls of Hope Program?

The Halls of Hope Program was created by the court, mental health providers, prosecutors and defense counsel in order to provide sentencing alternatives to individuals with a mental illness who are involved in criminal matters. The Program integrates treatment into the resolution of the case. The fundamental principal of the Program is that people who engage in criminal behavior *due to their mental illness* should undergo appropriate treatment in order to modify their behavior and achieve recovery. Punishment, such as jail, alone, has proven to be ineffective and inappropriate.

HOH is run through the Lebanon (NH) District Court and mental health services are provided by West Central Behavioral Health, Lebanon, NH and Health Care and Rehabilitation Services for eligible Vermont residents.

Someone charged with a crime can enter the Program on one of two tracks. **TRACK 1:** The defendant maintains his/her plea of “not guilty” and enters into an *Agreement to Continue for Dismissal*, an agreement in which the person waives his or her right to a speedy trial and the case is continued for a designated period. During this period, the person must remain of good behavior and comply with his/her Treatment Plan.

TRACK 2: The defendant is ordered to enter into the Program as part of a *suspended or deferred sentence*, where the defendant pleads “guilty” to the charge. A sentence, such as jail time, is suspended or deferred for a designated period of time during which the person must remain of good behavior and comply with his/her Treatment Plan. A defendant must voluntarily agree to enter HOH. If a defendant is not interested in applying to and meaningfully participate in HOH, a defendant will not be accepted into the Program.

What is a Treatment Plan?

A Treatment Plan outlines the specific treatment a participant must comply with as part of the Program. A Treatment Plan is created for each individual and typically includes counseling, case management/connection to community resources, taking prescribed medication, education/vocation rehabilitation and substance abuse treatment, if deemed appropriate. The Treatment Plan is in writing and is incorporated into the court orders.

Who creates the Treatment Plan?

The Treatment Plan is mainly developed by the participant, the Case Manager and a team of treatment providers. The Halls of Hope Team, which may include the Judge, the Mental Health Court Coordinator, the Case Manager, treatment providers, local law enforcement, social service representatives, the NH Dept. of Corrections, prosecutor and defense counsel, will be monitoring the participant's progress in their Treatment Plan. Family members or guardians responsible for the care and supervision of the participant may also have input for the Treatment Plan.

Who is the Halls of Hope Case Manager?

The Halls of Hope Case Manager is an employee of West Central Behavioral Health of Lebanon, NH. The Halls of Hope Case Manager assists with determining applicant eligibility for the Halls of Hope Program, arranges evaluations and prepares the Treatment Plan in conjunction with the participant and a team of treatment providers.

Who is the Mental Health Court Coordinator?

The Mental Health Court Coordinator is an employee of Grafton County and serves as liaison between the participant, the Court, West Central Behavioral Health and the entire Halls of Hope Team.

Must I receive treatment solely at West Central Behavioral Health?

No. West Central is the preferential treatment facility for the Team; however, the Case Manager may approve other options in the best interest of the client. All participants will work with the HOH Case Manager from West Central Behavioral Health.

Who is eligible for the Halls of Hope Program?

Individuals may be eligible to participate in HOH if they are 18 years of age or older, charged with a Class A misdemeanor pending in the 2nd Circuit Court-District Division- Lebanon, and have a diagnosed or diagnosable mental health issue that contributed to the behavior resulting in the charged offense. The defendant must not have any present charges or prior convictions involving sexual or violent offenses (select violent offenses may not exclude an individual from participation in the Program and will be reviewed on a case by case basis after thorough evaluation of the nature of the violence and appropriateness of the Program is conducted). The individual's prior criminal record may impact eligibility.

How do I get into the Halls of Hope Program?

Referrals to the Halls of Hope Program can come from a number of different sources including the bail commissioner (prior to arraignment), law enforcement, prosecutor, defense counsel, treatment provider or the court.

All referrals will be made to the Mental Health Court Coordinator. The Coordinator will explain the Halls of Hope Program to the individual and defense counsel. An application to determine program eligibility will be completed and submitted to the Coordinator. If a candidate is eligible, (s)he will be referred to West Central Behavioral Health for an intake evaluation. Additional evaluations may be recommended. If the applicant is accepted in to the program by the Halls of Hope Team, a Treatment Plan incorporating the evaluations and input from the provider, prosecutor, defense counsel and applicant will be crafted. The Treatment Plan and a Participant Contract is signed by all necessary parties (usually members of the Halls of Hope Team) and will then be presented to the Court for approval.

Am I required to enter the Halls of Hope Program?

No. This is a voluntary Program. A participant must sign an Agreement before entering the Program.

Do I have to go back to court?

Yes. An important component of the Halls of Hope Program involves court review hearings with the Halls of Hope Team to evaluate compliance and concerns with the Treatment Plan. Participants are expected to attend 1-2 hearings per month, allowing for additional appearances as needed.

What happens if I do not comply with the Treatment Plan?

Initially, there will be a meeting between the Halls of Hope Coordinator, the Case Manager, prosecutor, defense counsel and participant to discuss the alleged infraction and any modification(s) to the Treatment Plan that may be appropriate to address the concern. If the participant disputes the infraction or any suggested modifications to the Treatment Plan, the prosecutor will notify the court and a court hearing may be scheduled.

If the participant is found to be in noncompliance with the Treatment Program, then a modification may be ordered by the court or the participant may be terminated from the Halls of Hope Program. If a client is terminated from the program, the deferred sentence will be imposed.

What else does the Halls of Hope Program involve?

Participants are closely supported by the Halls of Hope Case Manager for success in obtaining housing, employment and following all other Program conditions. Participants will follow through with any lab tests with the cooperation of the participant's doctor to ensure that they are taking their medications as prescribed and are not abusing medications or drugs. Refusal will be addressed by the Halls of Hope Team and may result in consequences.

What happens when the term for the Halls of Hope Program ends?

Upon successful completion of the Program, participants will transition away from Mental Health Court after commencement with an after-care plan in place, and at this time the deferred sentence will not be imposed.

Halls of Hope
CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information on the Halls of Hope Program contact:

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38 Centerra Parkway
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West Central Behavioral Health at Rivermill
85 Mechanic Street, Suite 360
Lebanon, NH 03766
603-448-5610

New Hampshire Public Defender's Office
Route 10, RR #1, Box 42A
Orford, NH 03777
603-353-4440

Lebanon Police Department
36 Poverty Lane
Lebanon, NH 03766-2744
(603) 448-1212

2-1-1 New Hampshire

2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that connects callers, at no cost, to information about critical health and human services available in their community. Residents in New Hampshire can contact 2-1-1 NH toll-free by dialing 2-1-1 in state or 1-866-444-4211 from out