

How is the Mental Health Court Organized?

The Mental Health Court is a 3 Phase intervention program designed for adults who have one or more misdemeanor-level offenses and who are eligible for appropriate services with Riverbend or other qualifying Mental Health Agencies. The Court is a collaborative effort between a number of key agencies who are dedicated to working together. These agencies seek to provide court supervision, community monitoring, case management, and mental health treatment geared toward supporting an individual in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Mental Health Court involves frequent court appearances, and random drug testing, as well as group and individual counseling. Mental Health Court awards incentives for healthy, appropriate behavior and imposes sanctions for negative behavior. Participants who do not comply with the regulations and conditions of the Mental Health Court may be subject to sanctions up to and including termination from the Court. Such individuals will be returned to the normal criminal justice system for disposition.

Who is Eligible? Any person who has been charged with a misdemeanor criminal offense and **who has a mental illness that contributed to the criminal offense(s).**

Mental Health Court Clients

- Medium to high-risk adult defendants diagnosed with a mental illness.
- Cases will be screened for eligibility. Initial screen is done by the Mental Health Court Manager, Dawn Tonkin. Input may be requested from law enforcement on a candidate's appropriateness for admission.
- Participants cannot be on felony probation nor have any holds from other jurisdictions.
- Participants cannot have any pending cases or prior convictions for sexual or felony offenses.
- Other pending felony charges make an individual ineligible.
- Participants must be residents of Merrimack County.



MERRIMACK COUNTY CONCORD DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH COURT (MC-CDC MHC)



Honorable M. Kristin Spath
Presiding Justice

6th Circuit – District Division Concord
Concord District Court
32 Clinton Street, Concord, NH 03301

Ross L. Cunningham – Superintendent
Merrimack County Dept. of Corrections
314 DW Highway, Boscawen, NH 03303

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What is Mental Health Court?

The Mental Health Court was developed in order to provide sentencing alternatives to individuals with mental illness who are involved in criminal matters. It is an intensive and comprehensive court program which integrates treatment into the resolution of the criminal case. The fundamental principle 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. Mental Health Court holds its participants accountable for their behavior, provides them with support and assistance, and works collaboratively with service providers for quality care of that individual.

The Merrimack County-Concord District Court Mental Health Court is funded by the Merrimack County Department of Corrections.

Referral Process

A participant can be referred to Mental Health Court by anyone initially. Once referred, the participant will be screened by the Mental Health Court Program Manager. Once screened, the potential participant must then be approved by the Mental Health Court team, including defense counsel, prosecutors, and the Mental Health Court Program Manager.

Justice Fact of the Week

A vast majority of persons institutionalized with serious mental illness now reside in prisons and jails. However, mental health courts have proven to be an effective alternative for diverting those with serious mental illness away from prisons and jails.

Tommy Fuller, et al. "More Mentally Ill Persons Are in Jails and Prisons Than Hospitals: A Survey of the States." Treatment Advances Center and the National Health Association. (2010).Stinson, Matthew. "The Promise of Mental Health Courts: Brooklyn Criminal Justice Experiments with Treatment as an Alternative to Prison." American Bar Association Criminal Justice. (2007).Seveloff, Dale, & Brinkley, Robert. "Effectiveness of a Mental Health Court in Reducing Criminal Recidivism and Hospitalization." American Journal of Psychiatry. (2002).

The Justice Initiative
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY For more information about
The Justice Initiative and the
Justice Fact of the Week go to:
ji.columbia.edu

Mission Statement

The Merrimack County-Concord District Court Mental Health Court in Merrimack County strives to reduce recidivism of offenders in the criminal justice system that have a mental illness. The Mental Health Court provides community protection with cost effective, integrated continuation of care through the development and utilization of community resources. The Mental Health Court holds people accountable and assists participants in achieving long term stability, becoming law abiding citizens, and successful family and community members.

**6th Circuit – District Division –
Concord**
Phone: 1-855-212-1234
Hours: 8:00AM – 4:00PM
Jurisdiction: Merrimack County