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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
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San Diego Superior Court Launches Behavioral Health Court

In an effort to break the cycle of incarceration for San Diego's mentally ill, the San Diego Superior Court is now providing Behavioral Health Court services. The court program is a collaborative effort with other government agencies including the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Sheriff's Department, Probation Department, City of San Diego and County Mental Health Services.

The goal of the program is to promote public safety and assist in the recovery of eligible mentally ill offenders by providing high-intensity, individualized treatment, supervision and custody alternatives. The program, which is funded through Prop. 63 monies, has been in development for more than a year.

Similar to Drug Courts, Behavioral Health Courts focus on treatment to restore health and reduce criminal activity. The program will be available to those who meet qualifying criteria including being probation eligible and diagnosed with a serious mental illness.

"This program is truly directed toward public safety. Instead of incarcerating someone with a mental illness and sending them back out into society, this program will offer eligible

(More)

Superior Court of California, County of San Diego

NEWS RELEASE

Page 2 of 2

2/23/2010

defendants medical treatment and, in some cases, job training which will help them rejoin society as law abiding, productive members,” says Assistant Presiding Judge Robert J. Trentacosta.

Judge Trentacosta will preside over Behavioral Health Court.

Behavioral Health Court sessions are currently held in Department 24 at the downtown courthouse. The goal is eventually to offer the program throughout the County.

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