

Overview

The Mental Health Court (MHC) is a 12-15 month program, three-phased, specialized treatment court designed to address the unique needs of individuals with mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disability disorders who are also facing pending legal charges.

MHC provides a structured link between treatment, rehabilitation, social support services, and the criminal justice system to promote self-sufficiency, accountability, holistic wellness, empowerment, and successful recovery.



For additional information on the Mental Health Court Program please contact:

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Mental Health Court Administrator

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Samantha Vandenberg

Mental Health Court Caseworker

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Hays County Mental Health Court | Hays County (hayscountytexas.com)



Program Goals

- Early identification of individuals at incarceration and at all intercept points of the criminal justice system
- Identification and coordination of access to treatment, transportation, housing, and support services for inmates facing mental health, substance use, and IDD disorders.
- Ensure that clinically appropriate services are provided to individuals with mental health challenges and that effective program evaluation and outcome measurements are used to gauge the effectiveness of the program.
- Collaborate and establish partnerships with other community agencies that will expand the availability of services and resources.
- Increase treatment compliance of the Mental Health Court participants through judicial monitoring, intensive case management, and supervision.

Hays County



Judge Elaine Brown

**Hays County Court-at-Law
712 S. Stagecoach Trail
San Marcos, Texas 78666**

Criteria

Defendants may be eligible for MHC if they have an active misdemeanor or felony case and are diagnosed with a mental health, substance use, or IDD disorder.

- Hays County Resident (case by case basis if out of county)
- 17 years of age or older
- Diagnosed with a mental health disorder such as Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Major Depressive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Substance Use disorders and intellectual and developmental disabilities are also diagnoses that are considered for MHC. Misdemeanor or
- Felony Offense(s)
- Link between the mental health/substance use/IDD Disorder and the current offense
- Assaultive offenses will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- No past or current charge of a sex offense
- No substantial history of violent offenses
- Competent
- Pre- or Post-Adjudication

Referrals

The Mental Health Court accepts referrals from all sources, including judges, defense attorneys, probation officers, the jail, treatment providers or family members.

The Hays County Mental Health Court webpage is now active and contains links for Referral Submission and an Attorney Permission Authorization Form.

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Screening & Acceptance

Clinical screenings are conducted at the MHC office or with inmates at the jail. At the screening appointment, the requirements and expectations of the MHC are explained, and participant agreement will be reviewed. If the defendant is eligible and agrees to participate in mental health and/or substance use treatment and agrees to comply with medications, the referral process will continue.

- Defendant must agree to sign an Authorization for Disclosure to allow MHC staff to coordinate referrals and request regular updates from treatment providers.
- A request will be submitted to our Mental Health Treatment Provider for an evaluation. Clinical Staff will determine the appropriate diagnosis and treatment recommended.
- Case will be staffed with the Mental Health Court team for placement into the MHC.
- The case continues through the normal judicial process if the defendant is NOT accepted.

Program Participation

The length of participation is a minimum 12 months. Program length may differ for each participant and is directly related to the offense, individual progress toward treatment plan goals and compliance with MHC requirements and conditions.

Successful Program Completion Includes:

- Stabilized mental health condition with medication compliance.
- Abstinence from drugs and alcohol
- Successful completion of mental health and substance abuse treatment plan goals
- Compliance with court orders, conditions of probation, and program requirements.
- Mental Health Court docket is twice a month on Mondays. Frequency of court appearances is determined by the phase a participant is in and the progress being made in treatment and with probation conditions.

Mental Health Court Team

Kaimi Mattila, Mental Health Court

Administrator

Samantha Vandenberg, Mental Health Court

Case Worker

Contact Information

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