



PRESS RELEASE

FROM: THE FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA, COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

On Friday September 23, 2011 the First Judicial District Mental Health Court will celebrate its **2 year anniversary** and **Fall Goal Achievement Ceremony** at the Criminal Justice Center, 1301 Filbert Street at 10:00 am in courtroom 304. The guest speaker will be **Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams**.

Under the guidance of Supervising Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper the First Judicial District Mental Court (FJDMHC) provides an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders with mental illness and co-occurring disorders by preparing individuals for re-entry into more effective treatment modalities in supervised community settings. The FJDMHC aims to reduce the jail population and criminal justice costs by balancing justice, treatment and public safety.

The First Judicial District Mental Health Court provides a unique multidisciplinary collaborative approach that combines intensive wrap-around treatment and individualized probation supervision, through the combined and coordinated efforts of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas, The Office of the Deputy Mayor of Public Safety, Philadelphia Prison System, Defender Association of Philadelphia, Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, Philadelphia Adult Probation/Parole and the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services.

Since receiving funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency the First Judicial District Mental Health Court has set out to achieve five distinct goals:

- To facilitate the re-entry of offenders with mental illness from incarceration into supervised community treatment settings
- To provide treatment, housing, benefits and community support services for defendants with mental illness
- To support effective communication between the criminal justice and mental health systems
- To reduce recidivism by defendants with mental illness
- To preserve public safety

In the process of achieving these goals the FJDMHC has saved more than 10,000 incarceration days an estimated savings of more than 1 million dollars for the City of Philadelphia.

An integral aspect of FJDMHC is to motivate the participants to continue their treatment, comply with medications and maintain themselves as law-abiding citizens. The purpose of the Goal Achievement Ceremony is to acknowledge those individuals for accomplishing the goals set by the Court and treatment team. Goals can range from participating in treatment to living independently. The Fall Goal Achievement Ceremony will recognize 15 participants who have successfully progressed through several stages of treatment and supervision.

