

Mental health courts focus on the treatment and rehabilitation of offenders with a history of serious mental illness, which is oftentimes the root cause of the person's criminal involvement. Some of the goals of mental health court dockets include:

- Diverting non-violent offenders out of the traditional criminal justice track
- Reducing the length of confinement for offenders with serious mental illness
- Improving the mental health and well-being of the participants
- Increasing access to treatment services
- Creating effective working relationships between the treatment and criminal justice systems
- Improving public safety by reducing recidivism
- Relieving jail and prison overcrowding

To this end, Courtroom # 2 operates a Supreme Court certified mental health court docket. A particular session of court that offers a therapeutically oriented judicial approach to providing court supervision and appropriate treatment to individuals may be styled a "specialized docket" only upon receipt of certification by the Ohio Supreme Court. Courts must be recertified every three years. To be considered for certification, a program must meet 12 Standards established by the Supreme Court.

Standard 1. Planning Process

- A. Establishment of an Advisory Committee.** The advisory committee is made up of attorneys, probation, clinicians, treatment providers, law enforcement and community members who meet quarterly to develop plans and procedures and oversee docket operations.

B. Establishment of a treatment team. The treatment team is responsible for implementing daily operations of a specialized docket. In addition to the specialized docket judge, the treatment team may include, but is not limited to, the following members:

- (1) Probation officers: Seth Burch
- (2) Licensed treatment providers; Christina Jolley and Gail Houk
- (3) A prosecutor; Lauren Haas
- (4) Defense counsel; Jocelyn Stefancin
- (5) A specialized docket program coordinator; Carla Damron
- (6) Case managers; Kelsey Vasicek
- (7) Law enforcement personnel; Chief Keough of Lodi police department
- (8) Jail personnel: Sgt. Boone of the Medina County Sheriff's Office

Standard 2. Non-Adversarial Approach. A specialized docket shall incorporate a non-adversarial approach while recognizing:

- (A) A prosecutor's distinct role in pursuing justice and protecting public safety and victim's rights; and,
- (B) A defense counsel's distinct role in preserving the constitutional rights of the specialized docket participant.

For consistency in the non-adversarial approach, prosecutors and defense counsel are trained in specialized docket processes.

Standard 3. Legal and Clinical Eligibility and Termination. A specialized docket shall have written legal and clinical eligibility, completion, termination, and neutral discharge criteria. The MHIP will screen offenders for eligibility using the following criteria:

- Any post-conviction Community Control or Intervention In Lieu of Conviction (ILOC) eligible case(s) where the participants' have severe and persistent mental illnesses that are contributing or mitigating factors in their legal involvement and for whom court-monitored treatment and other services would enhance their ability to lead a law-abiding life.
- The offender has been assessed and diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness or have a dual diagnosis of mental illness and chemical abuse/dependency which are contributing or mitigating factors in their legal involvement.

The offender must be a resident of Medina County.

The offender is determined to be moderate or high/moderate to high risk utilizing the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS).

- The offender must be mentally competent and have the capacity to adhere to the participation requirements.

Potential participants are *generally* ineligible for participation in the MHIP if any of the following exist:

- The offender is charged with an offense for which a prison term is mandatory.
- The offender is charged with an offense involving the use of any weapon.
- The offender is charged with crime(s) of violence.
- The offender is actively working as a police informant.
- The offender is mentally incompetent.
- The offender poses a risk to the safety of themselves, staff, and/or the community.

The Medina County MHIP will not deny an offender admission to the specialized docket program based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, citizenship, marital status, veteran status, or any disability.

Standard 4. Assessment and Referral. A specialized docket shall promptly assess individuals and refer them to the appropriate services. All screenings and assessments for treatment determinations shall be provided by programs or persons who are appropriately licensed and trained to deliver such services according to the standards of the profession.

Standard 5. Individualized Needs and Evidence-Based Practices. A specialized docket shall have a plan to provide services that meet the individualized needs of each participant.

This may include services such as :

- (1) Education
- (2) Vocational training
- (3) Employment
- (4) Transportation
- (5) Housing
- (6) Physical, mental, and dental health.

and incorporate **evidence-based strategies** for the participant population.

Standard 6. Participant Monitoring. A specialized docket shall monitor each participant's performance and progress and incorporate all of the following:

- (A) Regular treatment team meetings prior to the status review hearings.
- (B) Status review hearings

(C) Ongoing communication among the treatment team members, including frequent exchanges of timely and accurate information about the participant's overall performance.

(D) Progression through the specialized docket based upon the participant's performance in the treatment plan and compliance with requirements of the specialized docket phases. A participant's progress through the specialized docket phases is not to be based solely upon preset timelines.

(E) Explanation to the participant of responses to compliance and noncompliance, including criteria for termination.

Standard 7. Status Review Hearings.

(A) Ongoing judicial interaction. A specialized docket shall incorporate ongoing judicial interaction with each participant as an essential component of the docket.

(B) Appearance before specialized docket judge.

(1) At a minimum, a specialized docket participant shall appear before the specialized docket judge at least twice monthly during the initial phase of the specialized docket.

(2) Thereafter, a specialized docket participant shall regularly appear before the specialized docket judge to review the participant's progress through the specialized docket.

Standard 8. Substance Monitoring. A specialized docket shall monitor a specialized docket participant's substance use by random, frequent, and observed alcohol and other drug testing.

Standard 9. Treatment and other Rehabilitation Services.

Access to a continuum of approved treatment and other rehabilitation services.

All required treatment and programming shall be provided by programs or persons who are appropriately licensed and trained to deliver such services according to the standards of their profession.

Standard 10. Incentives and Sanctions. Immediate, graduated, and individualized incentives and sanctions shall govern the responses of a specialized docket to a specialized docket participant's compliance or noncompliance.

Incentives may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Encouragement and praise from the specialized docket judge;
- (2) Ceremonies and tokens of progress, including advancement in specialized docket phases;
- (7) Encouragement to increase participation in positive activities the participant finds pleasurable, such as writing, art work, or other positive hobbies;
- (8) Gifts of inspirational items, including books, pictures, and framed quotes;
- (9) Assistance with purchasing clothing for job interviews;
- (10) Gift cards for restaurants, movie theaters, recreational activities, or personal care services;
- (11) Gifts of small personal care items, hobby or pet supplies, plants, or small household items.

Sanctions for noncompliance Sanctions for a specialized docket participant's noncompliance vary in intensity and may include:

- (1) Warnings and admonishment from the specialized docket judge.
- (2) Demotion to an earlier specialized docket phase.
- (3) Increased frequency of drug or alcohol testing and court appearance.
- (4) Refusal of specific requests, such as permission to travel.
- (5) Denial of additional or expanded privileges or rescinding privileges previously granted.
- (6) Increased supervision contacts and monitoring.
- (7) Individualized sanctions, such as writing essays, reading books, or performing other activities to reflect upon unacceptable behavior.
- (10) Jail or out-of-home placement.
- (11) Community control or probation violation.

(12) Termination from the specialized docket.

Standard 11. Professional Education. A specialized docket shall assure continuing interdisciplinary education of treatment team members to promote effective specialized docket planning, implementation, and operations.

(A) Continuing education plan

(D) Mentor courts

(E) Observation of other specialized dockets

Standard 12. Effectiveness Evaluation. A specialized docket judge shall evaluate the effectiveness of the specialized docket by doing each of the following:

(A) Reporting data as required by the Supreme Court, including information to assess compliance with these standards.

(B) Engaging in on-going data collection in order to evaluate whether the specialized docket is meeting its goals and objectives.