



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge**

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Date: September 19, 2017

Westchester County Drug Courts Receive Grant to Help Combat Opioid Crisis, Expand Services for Justice-Involved Military Veterans

White Plains, New York – Supported by a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the New York State court system's Ninth Judicial District, which encompasses Westchester County, is launching a new drug court initiative in the County to focus on the unique needs of two populations: individuals with opioid use disorder and justice-involved military veterans. The Westchester County Drug Enhancement Project aims to enhance the delivery of clinical and other services to these target populations, including the provision of medication-assisted treatment (MAT), where appropriate, to Westchester County Drug Treatment Court participants.

The use of MAT in addition to traditional forms of treatment such as behavioral counseling can be vital in ensuring better outcomes for individuals with an opioid addiction, who now make up over 50 percent of those enrolled in the County's drug treatment courts.

The SAMSHA grant, totaling \$971,736 over a three-year period, will also support personnel, training and other needs related to the development of a peer mentor initiative to help military veterans enrolled in the County's drug treatment court programs re-adjust to civilian life and get back on track, as well as efforts to increase participation rates in court-mandated treatment programs among justice-involved veterans. Additionally, the grant will fund an evaluation study of the County's treatment/veterans court programs, which offer non-violent

offenders with substance use and co-occurring disorders – including military service-related disorders which can lead to substance and alcohol abuse – access to intensive court-supervised treatment and tailored services to reduce incarceration and recidivism.

Hon. Alan D. Scheinkman, Administrative Judge for the Ninth District, said, “This grant will enable the Westchester courts to expand their efforts in linking justice-involved individuals with a substance use disorder, including veterans, to critical services, affording these offenders a chance to break the cycle of abuse and lead productive lives.”

Westchester County’s first drug court opened in 2001. The Westchester County Drug Enhancement Project, under Judge Scheinkman’s direction, will coordinate the efforts of Westchester County drug court programs currently operating in Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, White Plains and Yonkers. The initiative will kick off in early October, upon disbursement of the SAMSHA funds to the District.

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Date: September 19, 2017

Grant to Support Expansion of Tompkins County Family Treatment Court

Ithaca, New York – Supported by a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the New York State court system’s Sixth Judicial District – which comprises Tompkins County – will expand the capacity of the County’s Family Treatment Court in response to the opioid epidemic’s impact on local families and the growing number of parents opting to participate in the Court’s intensively supervised treatment programs. The Tompkins County Family Treatment Court (FTC) targets child neglect cases in the County in which parental substance use disorder is a factor.

The SAMHSA funding will help fill existing gaps in court-monitored treatment programs for participating parents, while also boosting services to address the needs of the children. The grant, totaling \$2,105,489 over a five-year period, will support treatment and evaluation services, travel, training and other needs. This includes the addition of peer recovery support specialists, a part-time public health nurse, a mental health liaison and substance abuse counselors.

New York’s Family Treatment Courts are designed to provide parents with court-supervised substance abuse treatment and an opportunity to keep their families intact or, in cases where children have already been removed from their parents’ care, to promptly reunite families. FTCs serve the entire family, focusing on the best interests of the child. The goal is to achieve safe, timely permanency for children who have a parent in recovery. FTCs seek to reunite the family so long as the parent can sustain a safe, stable and nurturing permanent home. Cases are carefully screened for eligibility, with parental participation voluntary.

“FTCs have been shown to have a positive effect on outcomes in child welfare cases. This grant will enable the Tompkins County FTC to reach more families in carrying out its critical mission. I wish to extend my appreciation to SAMHSA for its support; and to the Court’s Presiding Judge, Hon. John C. Rowley, and staff, including FTC coordinator Mindy Thomas, for their tireless efforts in developing and expanding the reach of the FTC and securing this very sizable SAMHSA grant,” said Sixth Judicial District Administrative Judge Molly Fitzgerald.

The Tompkins County Family Treatment Court was launched in 2001 and currently serves some 65 parents and over 120 children. The Court will commence expansion in early October, upon disbursement of the SAMHSA funds to the Sixth Judicial District.

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