



Veterans' Court Diversion Program
Honorable Brent A. Carr,
Presiding Judge



Smart Justice

- Traditional vs. Non-Traditional
- Cost Savings
- Research Based
- Outcome Measurements

Veterans in North Texas (NTVHCS 40-county service area)

- Over 500,000 veterans in North Texas
- Over 100,000 are ages 17 – 44
- Over 6,000 are OEF/OIF veterans
- Law Enforcement and other first responders around the country are coming into contact with our returning combat veterans. Many of the circumstances involve any combination of aggressive driving, motor vehicle accidents, domestic violence, emotional crises, drug & alcohol related incidents, and in worst cases, suicide.

Legal encounters with Veterans

- For **ALL** veterans, who have been deployed to a combat zone, returning home can be difficult; especially the transition back to daily life --
(job, family, school, finances, marriage, kids)
- The way things were when they deployed might not be the same upon their return.

Coming home can be difficult...

Getting Started

- State Legislature authorized in 2009
- Misdemeanor and felony cases
- Admission Criteria
 1. Veteran or current member of the U.S. armed forces, including reserves
 2. Service connected brain injury / mental illness
 3. Brain Injury / Mental Illness played role in offense
- Use Ten Key Components

Ten Key Components

- 1. Integration of Justice System and Treatment
- 2. Non-adversarial approach
- 3. Early Identification and selection
- 4. Continuum of relevant treatment services
- 5. Monitored abstinence
- 6. Coordinated response strategy
- 7. Judicial interaction with participants
- 8. Monitoring and evaluation of program goals
- 9. Continuing education and planning
- 10. Relevant agency and organization partnerships

Tarrant County Veterans' Court Diversion Program

- **Established in January 2010**

- **MISSION**

Our mission is to successfully habilitate the JIV by diverting them from the traditional criminal justice system and providing them with the tools they need to lead a productive and law-abiding lifestyle while improving mental health recovery and successful re-entry into the community.

- **GOALS**

Our program's goals are to find JIV, assess their needs, offer assistance, manage their care, and provide them with successful treatment options ultimately leading to community reintegration, and resolution of their criminal case(s).

Exclusions

- Excessive Violence and Sex Offenders
- Previously unsuccessfully terminated from the Veterans' Court Program or who has previously graduated.
- Seriously and persistently mentally ill which renders him/her unable to participate in the structure of the Veterans' Court program.

2015 Legislation

- Senate Bill 84, Effective September 1, 2015
 - Expands eligibility: “occurred during or resulted from the defendant’s military service.”
 - Military sexual trauma added to list of qualifying conditions.
 - Allows participation by a military member or veteran without a qualifying condition if participation likely to achieve public safety and the veteran’s rehabilitation.
 - Curtesy supervision of out-of-county veterans
- House Bill 3729, Effective June 16, 2015
 - Involvement of family members in treatment process

Overview

- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Case Management
- Evidence Based Practices
- Court Appearances
- Drug Testing
- Incentives & Sanctions

Participant Data

- 153 Males vs. 5 Females
- Offenses
 - Misd. DWI= 91 (Felony DWI= 2)
 - Misdemeanor Assaults= 25 (Felony Assaults= 10)
 - Drug Related (other than alcohol)= 18
- Mental Illness
 - PTSD
 - TBI
 - Polysubstance Dependence (Alcohol Dependence)
 - MST (Men and Women)

Veterans' Court Program Today

- Total Admitted: 158
- Total Graduated: 109
- Total Terminated Unsuccessful: 17
- Total Currently Active: 32
- Successful Completion Rate: 87%
- Recidivism Rate: 6%

Veterans' Court Program Mentor Program

- Help veteran navigate the court, VA, and treatment systems
- Assess other needs and help them adjust to civilian life
- Help the veteran and their family receive the services they need to be productive members of society

Other Passed Legislation

- SB 1304 – Department of State Health Services to create women veterans mental health initiative.
- SB 1307 – Forgives failure to renew an occupational license for two years, waives certain fees
- SB 1309 – establishes teaching certificate for Junior ROTC
- HB 2123 - state military forces in the state group benefits program.
- HB 1363 - license plates to honor recipients of the Defense Meritorious Service Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Other Passed Legislation

- HB 923 - 36th Infantry Division specialty license plates
- HB 583 - Charitable giving to veteran organization in lieu of community service
- HB 3547 - voluntary veteran's employment preference for private employers.
- HB 2108 - medal for certain members of the military forces who served during the Cold War.
- HB 1128 - issuance of specialty license plates for recipients of the Combat Action Badge, Medal, or Ribbon.

“Home Has Help”



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