



# Treatment Court Month *Toolkit*

Michigan Association of Treatment Court Professionals

May 2024

# Table of Contents

<b>Thank You!</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Be an Advocate for Your Court</b>	<b>4-7</b>
<b>Sample Resolution</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Engaging Your Elected Officials</b>	<b>9-11</b>
<b>Getting the Media's Attention</b>	<b>12-13</b>
<b>Writing an Op-Ed</b>	<b>14-15</b>
<b>Social Media</b>	<b>16-19</b>
<b>Talking Points</b>	<b>20-23</b>
<b>Treatment Court Month Checklist</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Share!</b>	<b>25</b>



# Thank You!

The following 3 publications were relied on, or referenced, in the MATCP Toolkit (not listed in any specific order):

1. **National Treatment Court Month All Rise Toolkit**, May 2024.
2. **FY 2023 Problem-Solving Courts Annual Report**, Michigan Supreme Court.
3. **DWI Court Field Kit**, December 2012. Prepared by the National Center for DWI Courts, (NCDC), a professional services division of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). (*Now Impaired Driving Solutions, a division of All Rise.*) This Field Kit is available on the MATCP website under National Resources

Thank you to the **2023-2024 MATCP Communications Committee** for their assistance in developing this Toolkit. Committee members include:

- **Committee Chair: David Wallace**, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Huron County
- **Andrea Krause**, Prosecuting Attorney, Montcalm County
- **Shelly McFarlane**, Defense Attorney, Genesee County Adult & Juvenile Recovery Courts
- **Carol Smith**, Behavioral Health Director, Catholic Human Services (retired)



# Introduction

Day in and day out, Treatment Courts are successfully changing lives and making communities safer. Treatment Courts across the state of Michigan have thousands of success stories of individuals responding to and addressing their substance use disorder, becoming law abiding citizens, raising their families, and supporting their communities. It is important that their stories are told, and to make sure that the public and elected officials in Michigan know just what it means to graduate from a Treatment Court.

May is National Treatment Court Month, a fantastic time to share the news that Treatment Courts work. To help you in that effort, MATCP has developed this Treatment Court Toolkit. This Toolkit contains a wealth of information on ways you can tell the story of your Treatment Court: a story of inspiration and courage, perseverance and support, and freedom from dependency.

In this Toolkit, you will find ideas on how to bring attention to your Treatment Court using your local media, social media platforms, and educating your community. The Toolkit also includes a sample op-ed, suggested social media posts, and action steps to invite your elected officials to a graduation or other court activity.

To increase Treatment Court successes and ultimately support all in need of the life-changing benefits Treatment Courts can offer, we must share the news. Treatment Court team members know the success of these courts. Let's make sure our communities know that as well. Knowledge brings success; success brings expansion; expansion brings sustainability. Take the time, make a plan, and be heard. Your voice matters.

As you work towards getting the word out, know that MATCP is here, ready to assist you in your work.



May is National Treatment Court Month, a fantastic time to share the news that Treatment Courts work.





# Be an Advocate for Your Court

**Michigan's Treatment Courts** are saving lives and making our communities safer. Treatment Courts are making a difference, and it is time to share that life-saving message with your community. This Toolkit is designed to help you get the message out.

Growing the impact of Treatment Courts and building sustainable programs takes support from our communities, and local, state, and federal elected officials. It requires that we share our message and ensure that everyone knows that Treatment Courts work! This Toolkit provides some helpful information to help tell your story.

There are a variety of approaches to sharing about the life-changing work your Treatment Court does, and the sooner you begin your planning, the greater your impact. Below are just a few suggestions.

## A. GRADUATION

A powerful Treatment Court message happens when participants complete this very challenging program. As members of a Treatment Court team, we know what it takes. We understand how difficult success can be for our participants in a Treatment Court. They were challenged every day, and by their perseverance, they made it. Celebrating that success with your community demonstrates the life-changing work of a Treatment Court. Plan a graduation for this Treatment Court Month and then invite local, state, and federal elected officials, along with the media, to share in the joy of this momentous occasion for a participant.



# Be an Advocate for Your Court

## B. COMMUNITY GROUPS

Speak to your community groups such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Elks, American Legion and VFW Posts, etc. Don't forget your local churches and schools. Recruit your judge, prosecutor and defense attorneys and discuss what a Treatment Court is, how it works, and why it is making a difference in your community. If you have a graduate who is willing, have that individual share their story of achievement. Keep in mind, speaking to your community groups is not a one-time activity. Revisit your community group, to let the group know how your court is doing.

## C. OP-ED

Submit an opinion piece (op-ed) to your local newspaper and share about your program's success. It helps to have a "hook" or tie in with a current event, such as National Treatment Court Month, to elevate your message. There are a number of different opportunities to share an op-ed with your local paper beyond National Treatment Court Month, such as Veteran's Day, Alcohol Awareness Month (April), Mental Health Awareness Month (May), and Impaired Driving Prevention Month (December). Writing an op-ed and a sample op-ed are included later in this Tool Kit.



**Treatment Courts are making a difference, and it is time to share that life-saving message with your community.**



# Be an Advocate for Your Court

## D. HAVE A RESOLUTION ISSUED

Speak with your local government—county, city, town, village—and have that governing body issue a Treatment Court Month resolution or proclamation. Obtaining a resolution is an honor and reinforces the value of your actions and the lives you are saving. Generally, 3-6 weeks' notice is required by public officials. The larger the jurisdiction, the more time that may be needed (see Sample Resolution, page 8).

## E. MEET WITH AN ELECTED LOCAL, STATE, OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

Schedule an in-person meeting with your mayor, township supervisor, county commissioner, state legislators, and members of Congress. Have your Treatment Court judge and possibly a graduate attend the meeting and discuss why they should support Treatment Courts, or if they already have come out in support of your court, thank them. Consider inviting them to not only a graduation, but also a Treatment Court session to see your court in action.





# Be an Advocate for Your Court

## F. OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Think about hosting other community activities to raise awareness and spread the important message of success during the Treatment Court Month. These activities could include:

- **Run / Walk / Bike Race**—a fun community event that can easily become an annual tradition.
- **Basketball / Softball Game or other Sporting Event**—possibly a game between local law enforcement, Treatment Court team members and participants.
- **Donation Drive**—find a local charity and hold a donation drive throughout the month. This is also a great opportunity to network with local business owners. Be sure to involve your participants.
- **Community Clean-Up**—Participants, team members, and members of the community could come together to clean up a local park or school grounds. This could also provide your participants some community service hours if desired.

Keep in mind that this is only a short list. The opportunities are endless. You may want to use a portion of your team meeting to brainstorm other community activities. Also, consider some of these activities could be opportunities for community service hours for your participants. Always remember to check any applicable laws or regulations, including permits, licensing, traffic control requirements, and even liability insurance.





# Sample Resolution

*Below is a sample resolution, similar to the one passed by the Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan Senate in May 2023. Take it, add information from your specific court along with other Michigan statistics (see Talking Points, pages 20-23) and ask your county commission, city, township, village, etc. to pass a similar resolution for this upcoming year. Build support for your Treatment Court.*

## **A Resolution to Recognize May 2024 As Treatment Court Month**

Whereas, Treatment Courts are the cornerstone of justice reform sweeping the nation and are recognized as the most successful justice system intervention in our nation's history; and

Whereas, Nearly 4,000 Treatment Courts nationwide, including Michigan's 210 Treatment Courts, have restored the lives and families of more than 1.5 million individuals; and

Whereas, Outcomes have shown significant improvements to substance use disorder treatment, substantially reduced addiction and related crime, and do so at less expense than any other criminal justice strategy with a savings of an average of \$6,000 for every individual they serve; and

Whereas, Treatment Courts facilitate community-wide partnerships, bringing together judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, substance use disorder treatment and rehabilitation professionals, law enforcement and community supervision personnel, researchers and educators, national and community leaders, and others dedicated to drug courts and similar types of treatment programs are healing families and communities across the country; and

Whereas, Treatment Courts improve public safety, education, employment, housing, financial stability, promote family reunification, reduce foster care placements, and increase the rate of mothers delivering babies who are drug-free; and

Whereas, Treatment Courts demonstrate that when one person rises out of substance use and crime, we all rise; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That the members of this legislative body recognize May 2024 as Treatment Court Month.

# Engaging Your Elected Officials

*(Adapted from NCDC 2012 DWI Court Field Kit)*

At different times your state and federal senators and representatives are in their home districts for a limited amount of time. We encourage every Treatment Court to reach out and invite your legislators to attend a graduation ceremony, a regular Treatment Court session, a staffing (with a signed non-disclosure agreement), or a special Treatment Court event. It is very possible that a staff person may attend in lieu of your member. This is still an excellent opportunity to inform your legislators about the life saving work your Treatment Court is doing.

If your legislator has been a strong advocate of your program, consider presenting that person with an award acknowledging their importance to your program. This can help encourage that person's attendance at your event.

In addition to inviting members of Congress, invite your governor, your mayor, your state legislators, your local officials, your chief of police, and your local media. Nothing communicates the vision, purpose, and effectiveness of Treatment Court as clearly as a graduation ceremony.

## **A. STEPS FOR INVITING YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS**

It is easy to forget sometimes that your elected officials work for you - the constituent. But they do! Community events are important to elected officials, particularly when there is press coverage. Your Treatment Court event is a perfect occasion to invite them to attend.

### **STEP 1 - CALL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS' OFFICES - LOCALLY, IN LANSING, AND IN WASHINGTON D.C.**

If you don't know it, you can go to <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials> to find your elected officials' contact information. This includes federal and state officials.

In your initial call, ask for the staff person who is "responsible" for Judicial/Treatment Court issues in that Member's office (usually the Judicial Legislative Assistant). Staff turnover can be frequent so any staffer you have previously met may be gone.

Typically, each elected official also has someone on staff called the "Scheduler" who will NOT be the same person in charge of Treatment Court issues. It is best to contact BOTH the scheduler and staff member.



# Engaging Your Elected Officials

When you reach the appropriate staff person, tell them who you are and that you would like to invite your elected official to a graduation being held during National Treatment Court Month.

Tell them that graduation is a part of National Treatment Court Month and you would be honored if the elected official would attend and provide keynote remarks. Let them know if the media will be attending. The staff person will likely refer you to the Scheduler. If they do not, ask for the Scheduler's contact information.

It is imperative that you talk to either the staffer or the Scheduler during that initial call. If you get the staffer's voicemail, leave a message and call the office back and ask for the Scheduler and make your request to that individual as well. Schedulers will often ask you to fill out a meeting request form and send it back to them. Follow up your first contact with an email within 24 hours summarizing your request.

## STEP 2 - MAKE A FOLLOW-UP CALL

A few days after you send your request email/letter, follow-up with a phone call to the staff person confirming they received the request.

### **If the Scheduler says they have not made a decision on the invitation request yet:**

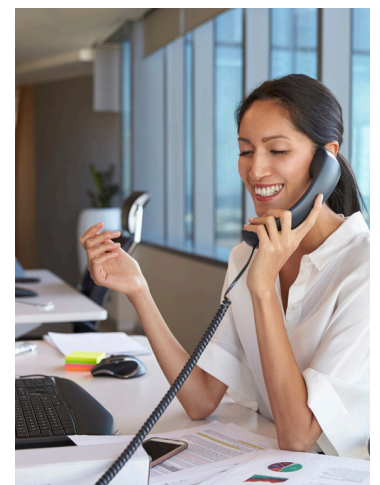
- Acknowledge the number of requests the Scheduler receives and thank the Scheduler for their time trying to accommodate your request.
- You may also want to mention any notable figures, public officials or community leaders who have confirmed attendance to the event.
- Ask when would be a good time to call back to confirm.

### **If the Scheduler says the elected official will not be able to attend:**

- Ask if there is another date that would work better (for future invites).
- Invite a different staff person to attend on behalf of the elected official.

### **If the Scheduler says the elected official will be able to attend:**

- Thank the Scheduler for their help.
- Confirm the key details: date, time, length of event, elected official's role.
- Provide your cell phone number for any last-minute changes.



# Engaging Your Elected Officials

## STEP 3 - RE-CONFIRM THE VISIT

A few days before the event, contact the elected official's Scheduler to confirm your event's date and time. Life moves pretty quickly for elected officials and their staff often have to rearrange their schedules at the last minute.

## B. DAY OF THE EVENT

Expect that staff members may accompany the elected official even if it was not specifically mentioned.

Consider appointing a person to greet and/or escort the elected official during the event and provide materials about your Treatment Court to them.

Ensure that media representatives who attend know the elected official is present. Likewise, ensure the elected official and their staff know that media is present.

## C. THANK YOUR ELECTED OFFICIAL FOR ATTENDING

Following your event, make sure to send a personalized thank you card to your elected official for attending. It is important for them to understand how much you appreciate their visit and this will help build a lasting relationship with your elected official.



We encourage every Treatment Court to reach out and invite your elected officials to attend a graduation ceremony, a regular Treatment Court session, a staffing (with a signed non-disclosure agreement), or a special Treatment Court event.





# Getting the Media's Attention

## A. TELL THE STORY

Your graduation or community event is newsworthy; it's important to you, to your team, your participants and to your community. In order to get it covered in the media, you have to make it important to the public. Ask yourself, "why should the people in my community care about this story?" Is it of community interest, or does it show a human side to life in your community? Is it part of a national trend? Can you involve community groups? What will make this event important to everyone else in the community?

## B. BE PREPARED AND PLAN

To be prepared, before any event, designate one of your team members to be your "media coordinator." That person will be responsible for reaching out to the media and then identifying them when they appear at your event. The "spokesperson" is typically different from the media coordinator. The spokesperson should be ready to have a number of prepared talking points about your Treatment Court, especially about the challenges your participants face in your program. Before the event, the media coordinator should be prepared to do a follow-up with the media if you haven't received a response that they will be attending.

You even may want to consider writing a **press release**. Many small-town papers and radio stations will print your release verbatim. If possible, include a picture with it, maybe of your team or a participant receiving an award. We have all heard the concept that a picture is worth a thousand words. Also, consider developing a brochure about your Treatment Court as a handout.



Your graduation or community event is newsworthy; it's important to you, to your team, your participants and to your community.



# Getting the Media's Attention

## STEP 1 - CONSIDER YOUR MESSAGE BEFOREHAND

You should be able to state your message in one line. For example: “We change lives.” “We are making this community safer.” “When one person rises out of drug dependency and finds recovery, we all rise.”

Ask yourself, would the third graders in the area understand your message? Remove any legal jargon so your message is easily understood. Consider if your parents or grandparents can understand it. Think about what is needed to ensure everyone can understand your message better.

Focus your message on how the issue affects the people in the community. You will need facts and statistics, but that is not your focus.

Everyone likes a story, so tell a story. Be sure to paint a picture so everyone can “see” your message.

## STEP 2 - BE PREPARED ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT

Determine beforehand who will be your spokesperson for the event. Typically, it will be the leader of the team, the Judge. Is that going to be it? Is a participant going to speak to the media? Make sure that the participant is willing to do so of their own volition, and completely understands the magnitude of sharing their story to the media. If you have another community leader or elected official present, that person may be someone else to speak to the media about your success and the importance of the court.



Left to Right: MATCP Executive Director, Kate Hude, MATCP Legislative Director, Hon. Harvey Hoffman (ret.), Michigan Supreme Court Justice & PSC Liaison, Hon. Kyra H. Bolden, MATCP Board Member, Hon. Carrie Fuca, MATCP Board Member, Hon. Sue Dobrich (ret.)



# Writing an Op-Ed

National Treatment Court Month typically gets significant media attention, because of the topic and the broad base of support. To encourage this attention and help get your message out, you can write an opinion editorial (op-ed). An op-ed is a great way to remind your legislators and your community that Treatment Courts are an effective response to high-risk / high-need individuals and these courts must have everyone's support.

## TIPS FOR WRITING AND SENDING YOUR OP-ED

**Find the hook:** Use a headline that gets to the point. What you say here determines whether the reader will read the rest of the article. Craft a headline that conveys immediately why this news matters. The headline and the opening paragraph should provide a gripping story. Using a “hook,” such as a graduate's story, can help.

**Stay focused:** Throughout the op-ed, stay focused on your message—keep it clear and persuasive. What is the need? Remember that this is an opinion piece, so state your opinion on what is needed to ensure your Treatment Court can continue to operate effectively.

**Humanize your op-ed:** Impart the “human” perspective. Providing anecdotes and personal stories can help bring the op-ed to life. Additionally, background information, quotes of note, etc., that illustrate the importance of your program should be included.

**Consider your audience's attention span.** In today's culture, attention spans are shorter. When reading, many people will only scan the first part of the article, so the most important information should be at the beginning so the reader is able to get the basic facts. If the person is going to continue reading your article, then include more details. These details are for your more interactive audience, those who are interested in the full story.

**Keep it short.** Maximum length should be one to two pages and no more than 500-600 words. This is not a doctoral thesis or law review article; this is an opinion piece.

**Your first and last paragraphs matter.** We remember best what we first read in the op-ed, and then what we last read. Your starting and ending paragraphs should be strong to have the most impact.

**Include complete contact information.** The contact's name should be someone who is available and capable of answering any follow-up questions.

**Know your media outlet's deadlines.** Reach out to the media outlet and ask what their deadline for submitting op-ed or press releases are.



# Writing an Op-Ed

## SAMPLE OP-ED:

### Your Treatment Court - Changing Lives and Protecting Our Community

In this town, and in this state, people are getting second chances through life-changing programs called Treatment Courts. These courts are changing lives, one person at a time, giving each one of them hope and the tools to build a life of recovery and be a law-abiding member of our community. Treatment Courts are changing lives and making our communities safer.

May is National Treatment Court Month and a time to acknowledge how Treatment Courts are saving lives and making our community safer. Michigan's Treatment Courts address the root causes of crime among substance use dependent offenders utilizing evidence-based practices to stop the cycle of crime and build a life of recovery. Based on the research, Treatment Courts have been proven to be the most successful justice intervention in our nation's history.

Here in \_\_\_\_\_ we offer hope to individuals who saw no hope in their lives with our [Type of Treatment Court]. Treatment Courts are different than traditional courts because we break down the silos typically in the justice system and build a team of diverse professionals to work together and provide an individualized plan of accountability and treatment for those in the program. Treatment Courts focus on individuals who are substance dependent and unable to break the cycle of dependency.

There are a total of 210 lifesaving Treatment Courts in Michigan making a difference. Participation in a Treatment Court is no easy task, as the requirements are rigorous. With frequent court appearances, frequent alcohol and other drug testing, intensive individualized treatment, and rigorous supervision, these Courts are not for the faint of heart. It takes work, total commitment, and perseverance. Over the past [x] years, this court has seen [x] participants who successfully completed this program and changed their lives.

[Insert a brief graduate success story]

This story is just one of thousands from across this county, our state, and this country that all demonstrate why Treatment Courts are vital to addressing the epidemic of substance use dependency and crime. It is this story and the thousand others that tell a tale of success, of recovery and of healing. It is a story of new beginnings because of this Treatment Court and all of those across the country.





# Social Media

Social media has changed how people connect and share news. The most widely used platforms are YouTube and Facebook, with approximately half of U.S. adults using Instagram. A smaller percentage use TikTok, LinkedIn, and X (Twitter).[1] Social media channels provide a low-cost way to share the good news of your Treatment Court with your family, your friends, to build a supportive community.

In building a strong base, be sure to follow MATCP's social media channels (Facebook; X; LinkedIn; & Instagram) as well as All Rise's channels (Facebook, YouTube; X; & LinkedIn). This will also allow you to find other uplifting messages to share on other Treatment Courts.

Share fact-checked information on your social media accounts—some of which includes the samples provided below. Don't be afraid to share why you support Treatment Courts and why this means so much to you and to the community.

Ask your team members and other potential supporters of your Treatment Court to share these messages as well.

A few tips include:

- Select a social media platform that you will use. There is no need to be on “all” platforms, choose one or two and create an impact on it.
- It is not the quantity that matters, it is the quality.
- Consider building a social media calendar that ties in with your Treatment Court's activities as well as national events, such as Alcohol Awareness Month (April), Mental Health Awareness Month (May), National Recovery Month (September), and Impaired Driving Prevention Month (December).
- Tell your story, the inspirations that you see day in and day out—make it a human story.
- Don't be afraid to include emoticons in your post.
- Use “hashtags” (#) but use them selectively in your post, one or two is more than sufficient
- If you have pictures or other supportive visual content—share it with your message—or let it be the message.

---

[1] Pew Research Center, Social Media Fact Sheet, obtained from <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/>, March 23, 2024



# Social Media

## A. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Inform your community about who you are and what you do! The more people know about your program, the more successful you will be. Educate the community about what your program offers and how you can help.

### 1. BE SOCIAL!

Share updates and interesting facts through your social media channels. This is a quick, easy, and inexpensive way to keep your community informed about your program's impact.

### 2. HASTAGS (#)

Have a universal #hashtag that can be used consistently year after year. Hashtags are great because they are interchangeable across social media platforms!

### 3. SHARE, TAG, SUPPORT!

The more you utilize social media, the more others will too! If you have an event and elected officials show up, SHARE this on social media. Everyone appreciates positive reinforcement and recognition—everyone, including ourselves.

### 4. SHARE WHAT'S AVAILABLE

Most people don't know what resources are available until they need to use them. Make sure people know where to go and who to contact during their time of need.



# Social Media

## B. SAMPLE POSTS

Below are sample Facebook posts and X posts you can use when promoting your Treatment Court.

### 1. SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS

May is National #TreatmentCourtMonth —a time to recognize the life-changing and life-saving efforts of the 4,000 Treatment Courts across the county.

There are now more than 4,000 Treatment Courts in the United States. Treatment Courts are the single most successful intervention in our nation’s history for leading people struggling with addiction out of the justice system and into lives of recovery. #TreatmentCourtMonth

Graduates of Michigan’s Adult Drug Court programs were, on average, more than 3 times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission to a program. #TreatmentCourtMonth

In Michigan’s Treatment Courts, unemployment dropped by 88% for Adult Drug Court graduates, 88% for Sobriety Court graduates, and 88% for Hybrid Court (Drug/Sobriety) graduates. #TreatmentCourtMonth

Michigan’s Sobriety Court graduates who used an ignition interlock device were nearly 5 times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission. #TreatmentCourtMonth

85% of Michigan’s Veterans Treatment Court graduates were crime-free after five years from admission into a VTC. #TreatmentCourtMonth

Michigan’s Mental Health Court graduates shows an average of 99% improvement in mental health and 99% quality of life improvement. #TreatmentCourtMonth

Treatment Courts save taxpayer money. Treatment Courts produce benefits of \$6,208 per participant and return up to \$27 for every \$1 invested. #TreatmentCourtMonth



# Social Media

## 2. SAMPLE X POSTS

May is National #TreatmentCourtMonth —a time to recognize the life-changing and life-saving efforts of the 4,000 Treatment Courts across the county.

86% of graduates were crime free after five years from admission into a Veterans Treatment Court in Michigan. #TreatmentCourtMonth

Michigan is a national leader with 28 Veterans Treatment Courts. #TreatmentCourtMonth

Michigan's Mental Health Court graduates shows an average of 99% improvement in mental health and 99% quality of life improvement. #TreatmentCourtMonth

Treatment Courts save taxpayer money. Treatment Courts produce benefits of \$6,208 per participant and return up to \$27 for every \$1 invested. #TreatmentCourtMonth

May is National #TreatmentCourtMonth. We are celebrating recovery through effective Treatment Courts.





# Talking Points

Below are some possible Treatment Court talking points when sharing the important message of your program. However, the most important talking points will be about your specific program. Be sure to add your own program's specific statistics (graduates, etc.) when discussing your success.

## A. NATIONAL

*Adapted from All Rise's 2023 & 2024 National Treatment Court Month Toolkit.*

There are now more than 4,000 Treatment Courts in the United States. Treatment Courts are the single most successful intervention in our nation's history for leading people struggling with addiction out of the justice system and into lives of recovery, stability, and health.

Treatment Courts have transformed the way the justice system responds to substance use and mental health disorders by combining accountability with evidence-based treatment.

By delivering individualized, evidence-based treatment, supervision, drug testing, and social services, Treatment Courts save lives and reduce crime.

Not only is the Treatment Court approach effective and humane, but it also saves considerable money for taxpayers. Research shows that Treatment Courts produce benefits of \$6,208 per participant and return up to \$27 for every \$1 invested.

In a study of three DWI (Sobriety) Courts located in Georgia, it was estimated that between 47 and 112 DWI arrests were avoided over 4 years because of these courts. The average cost of an arrest is approximately \$7,000, which translated into \$329,000 to \$784,000 in savings for the three counties.



# Talking Points

## B. MICHIGAN

In Michigan, there are 141 Drug/Sobriety Courts (62 Hybrid DWI/Drug, 40 Sobriety, 12 Adult Drug Courts, 10 Juvenile, 8 Family Dependency, 9 Tribal Healing-to-Wellness Courts), 42 Mental Health Courts (34 Adult and 8 Juvenile) and 27 Veterans Treatment Courts. That is a total of 210 lifesaving courts in Michigan. SCAO Problem-Solving Courts, as of February 1, 2024.

*The following statistics were obtained from the FY 2023 Problem-Solving Courts Annual Report, Michigan Supreme Court.*

One of the best indicators of success in a Treatment Court program is the length of time participants spend in the program—typically the longer, the better. Of the 2,263 participants discharged from a drug or sobriety court program during FY 2023, 69 percent successfully completed the program.

Michigan's Treatment Courts address the root causes of crime among individuals using evidence-based practices to stop the cycle of crime. Participation in a Treatment Court is no easy task, as requirements are rigorous.

As of 2017, state law requires all Problem-Solving Courts (PSC) in Michigan to be certified by SCAO. To be certified by the SCAO, PSC programs must comply with standards and required best practices.

Unemployment dropped by 100% for Adult Drug Court graduates, 88% for Mental Health Court graduates, 88% for Sobriety Court graduates, and 88% for Hybrid Court (Drug/Sobriety) graduates.

### 1. DRUG COURTS

Graduates of Adult Drug Court programs were, on average, more than 4 times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission to a program.

Drug Court programs are more structured and regimented than standard probation due to the population they serve. They require participants to engage in substance abuse treatment, randomly and frequently test for drugs and alcohol, and appear before the judge one or two times per month. Participants are also monitored intensively by probation officers and law enforcement, including home and employment checks to ensure compliance.



# Talking Points

## 2. SOBRIETY COURTS

When identified by program type, Sobriety Courts had the highest percentage of successful completions (76%).

Sobriety Courts accept only drunk/drugged driving offenders into their programs, addressing their substance abuse to reduce the threat of repeat impaired driving offenses that pose the greatest harm to Michigan's safe drivers.

Sobriety Court graduates who used an ignition interlock device were nearly 5 times less likely to be convicted of a new offense within three years of admission.

## 3. VETERANS COURTS

The impact of military service can leave veterans with physical injuries and invisible wounds. The Department of Veteran Affairs estimated that 8 out of every 100 veterans suffer from PTSD. Sadly, many veterans turn to alcohol or drugs to self-medicate, which can spiral into violations of the law.

When veterans become involved in the criminal justice system, Veteran's Treatment Courts (VTCs) respond in a non-traditional way by providing them the structured environment that is already ingrained in military personnel, treatment toward restoration, and mentoring with fellow veterans.

Only 12% of all VTC participants and 8% of graduates had a new conviction within three years. 80% of graduates were crime free after five years from admission into a VTC.

Graduates of VTCs were nearly 2 times less likely to reoffend within three years of admission to a program. The high success rate of VTCs is an early measure of their effectiveness. VTCs retained 80% of their participants over a 12-month period, which is important for allowing time for treatment engagement and increasing the likelihood of success in the program.

Michigan is a national leader with 27 VTCs.



# Talking Points

## 4. MENTAL HEALTH COURTS

Mental Health Courts are modeled after drug courts and were developed in response to the overrepresentation of people with mental illnesses in the justice system. Mental Health Courts are specially designed to help individuals who have a serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, co-occurring disorder, or developmental disability.

On average, Mental Health Court graduates were nearly 2 times less likely to commit another crime within three years of admission to the program.

Unemployment among Adult Circuit Mental Health Court graduates dropped by 81%.

Mental Health Court graduates shows an average of 99% improvement in mental health and 95% quality of life improvement.

## C. COST SAVINGS

*Adapted from All Rise's 2023 National Treatment Court Month Toolkit.*

Nationally, Treatment Courts save considerable money for taxpayers. Research shows that Treatment Courts produce benefits of \$6,208 per participant and return up to \$27 for every \$1 invested.





# Treatment Court Month Checklist

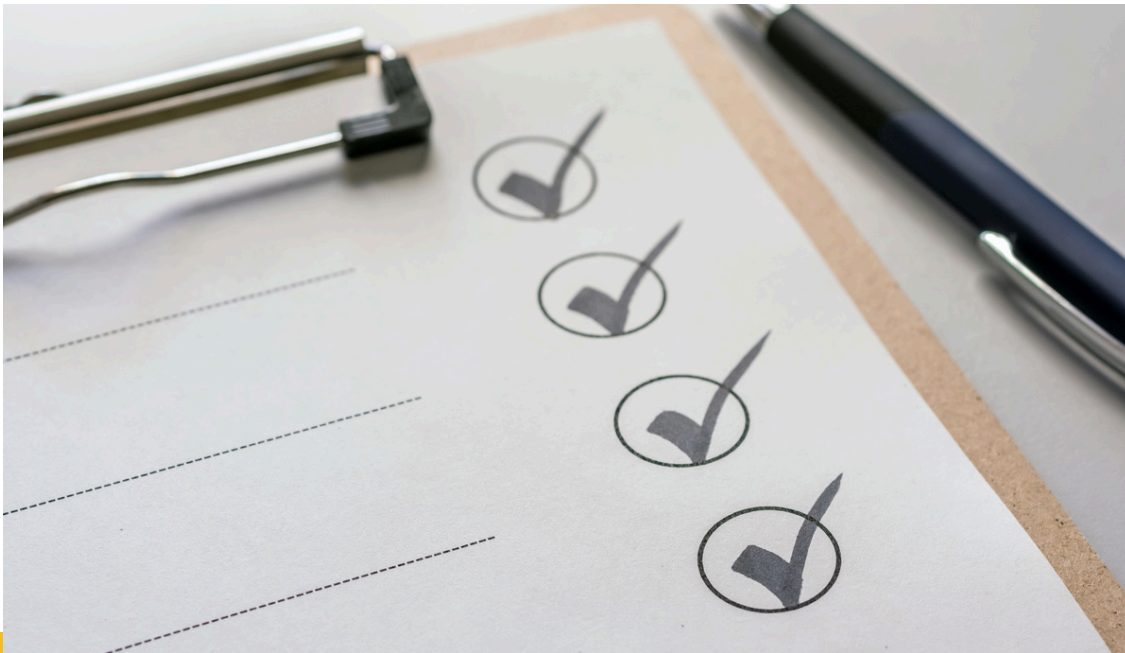
Below is a suggested checklist for your Treatment Court to be prepared for May's National Treatment Court Month and any events you are hosting.

## APRIL

- Schedule a graduation/activity for May.
- Invite your elected officials and other dignitaries to your graduation (see Engaging Your Elected Officials, pages 9-11).
- Schedule any other Treatment Court Month activities.
- Prepare and submit a resolution/proclamation for your local leaders.
- Assemble the talking points for your media outreach to include relevant local and national statistics.
- Create a flyer to hand out during graduation/activities (see Talking Points, pages 20-23).
- E-mail a media advisory to media contacts 5-10 days before your activities.

## MAY

- Make follow-up calls to media contacts.
- Submit an op-ed to your media contacts.
- Send media clips to your elected officials.
- Hold your graduation/activity.
- Send a thank you letter to any elected officials who attended your graduation/activity.



# Share!

We hope this Toolkit is helpful to you as you share the life-changing work of your Treatment Court with your community!

Do you have successes to share?

Email stories, photos, and video clips to [info@matcp.org](mailto:info@matcp.org).



Photos used:

On the cover (left to right):

1. A graduate of Michigan's 36th District Adult Drug Court laughs with Judge Shannon Holmes. *Reprinted with permission of the 36th District Court and Judge Shannon Holmes.*
2. A graduate with Judge Breeda O'Leary of the 29th District Mental Health Court. *Photo property of MATCP.*
3. Judge Breeda O'Leary of the 29th District Mental Health Court with a graduate and the graduate's support person of the 29th District Mental Health Court. *Photo property of MATCP.*
4. An excited graduate at the 36th District Court treatment court graduation. *Photo property of MATCP.*

Page 4: A graduate with Judge Breeda O'Leary of the 29th District Court. *Photo property of MATCP.*





# Contact & Follow Us:



201 Townsend Street  
Suite 900  
Lansing, MI 48933



517.374.9134



[matcp.org](http://matcp.org)  
[matcpconference.org](http://matcpconference.org)



[Facebook](#)



[Twitter](#)



[LinkedIn](#)