
Juvenile Drug Court continues to expand

In early spring of 2006, planning began for a new juvenile drug court to be established in the Northwest Judicial District in Minot. Minot's drug court became the fourth juvenile drug court in the state.

Minot's drug court team attended training at the National Drug Court Institute and with the North Central Judicial Drug Court in Grand Forks. The Minot drug court began in mid-January 2007. The Northwest Judicial District plans to begin training for another juvenile drug court in Williston in 2007.

The first juvenile drug courts began operation on May 1, 2000. In 2000, pilot courts were established in the Northeast Central Judicial District in Grand Forks under the judgeship of Hon. Debbie Kleven, and in the East Central Judicial District in Fargo under the judgeship of Hon. Ralph Erickson.

After two years of studying and planning, the committee made up of government officials, law enforcement, attorneys, indigent defense counsel, treatment providers, judges, juvenile court, and the attorney general's office, concluded that drug and alcohol abuse by juveniles was a significant factor in referrals to North Dakota juvenile

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courts. A recommendation was made to the Juvenile Policy Board and to the Supreme Court by this committee to begin a pilot project for juvenile drug court. Under the direction of Justice Mary Muehlen Maring, an advisory board was formed to monitor and evaluate the program. Grant funds were received in the planning stage for training and implementation of the courts.

North Dakota had treatment and support resources in place and the willingness of the communities to make the program successful. The program requires a team which consists of a judge, prosecutor, defense counsel, treatment provider, probation, coordinator, school representative, and law enforcement. The program is an intensive accountability program providing specialized services for substance abusing juveniles and their families and combining the coercive powers of the judiciary with intensive drug treatment, close supervision, and offender accountability. Juvenile drug courts are an alternative for out-of-home placement for juveniles who have not been charged with manufacturing or selling drugs or who have not committed a violent felony crime. The participants of the program are juveniles between the age of 13 and 17 who have been assessed with an alcohol or substance abuse. The program lasts a minimum of nine months.

Kevin Thompson, Ph.D., North Dakota State University Department of Criminal Justice and Public Policy, was hired by the North Dakota Supreme Court to evaluate the programs. Dr. Thompson created a comparison group for his studies from a group of juveniles from the South Central Judicial District who met the same criteria as drug court participants, but who were not enrolled in a juvenile drug court program. From data collected by Dr. Thompson, the pilot programs proved highly successful in reducing recidivism. A Preliminary Outcome Evaluation of North

Dakota Juvenile Drug Court-Recidivism Analysis was completed by Dr. Thompson in 2001 where he used the drug court participants and the comparison group.

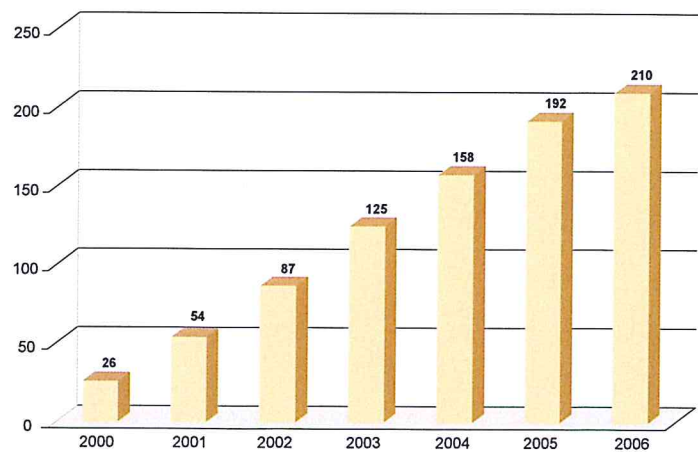
In this study, recidivism was defined as a subsequent arrest following admission to drug court that is classified as a class B misdemeanor or higher, with infractions and non-criminal violations discounted in the recidivism analysis. Dr. Thompson's findings demonstrated that the drug court participants showed a significantly lower recidivism rate than the juveniles in the comparison group. The study also showed that if the juvenile recidivated, the length of time between referral and recidivism is longer for drug court participants than for non-drug court juveniles. Data also indicates an improvement in academic achievement for drug court participants.

This data also contributed to the establishment of a juvenile drug court in the South Central Judicial District. The court began operation on October of 2002, with Hon. Bruce Romanick as the primary judge.

Data continues to be collected by Dr. Thompson for evaluation purposes. The following charts provide

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Cumulative Juvenile Drug Court Participation 2000-2006



information on the North Dakota Juvenile Drug Court Program since its inception in 2000 to the end of 2006.

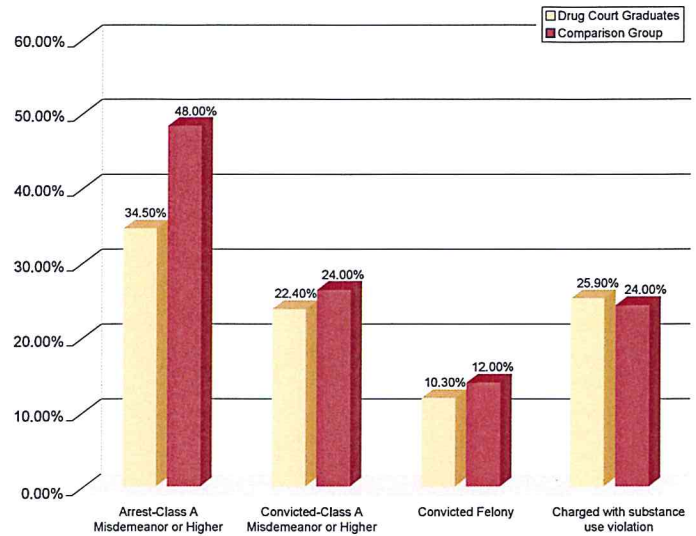
As of December 31, 2006

- 213 juveniles had entered the drug court programs.
- 72 have graduated from the drug court programs.
- Average age at entry is 16.2 years.
- Average number of prior referrals to juvenile court before entering drug court is 5.7.
- Fifty percent of the participants are terminated from the program because of noncompliance and further offenses.
- Marijuana and alcohol are the main drugs of choice.
- Sixty-one percent of the participants had a dual diagnosis (substance abuse and mental health)

The courts have gone through many changes in the last six years and continue to adapt the program to the juveniles' ever changing needs. The commitment and dedication of the team members are what has made this program so successful. The East Central Juvenile Drug Court is now under the judgeship of Hon. Wade Webb and the Northeast Central Juvenile Drug Court is under the judgeship of Hon. Karen Kosanda Braaten. The Northwest Juvenile Drug Court is under the judgeship of Hon. Doug Mattson.

It is clear that the success of juvenile drug court is changing lives of our juveniles and their families. The program continues to be monitored by the Juvenile Drug Court Advisory Committee and evaluated by Dr. Kevin Thompson. Justice Mary Muehlen Maring continues to serve as the director and Marilyn Moe as state coordinator.

Male Adult Recidivism Rates-Graduates vs. Comparison Group



GPA by Drug Court Status Two Quarters prior to Drug Court and Two Quarters Following Admission to Drug Court. August 2005.

