

Treatment Courts



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Treatment courts are composed of judges, probation officers, treatment providers, attorneys, coordinators, and others to use a combination of frequent supervision, drug testing, treatment, and status hearings to support Idahoans at risk of recidivism in need of behavioral health services. Through the provision of these services in the community, Idaho avoids costs associated with incarceration while improving the lives of Idaho families.

Several statewide outcome evaluations have demonstrated the effectiveness of Idaho's treatment courts. A 2019 mental health court evaluation found that recidivism was lower for participants (34%) than for the comparison group (43%). Additionally, offenders who were at the highest risk for recidivism actually had the lowest rate of felony recidivism (7%) after their participation in a mental health court.

In FY2020, there were 67 treatment courts in 38 of Idaho's 44 counties. These courts served 2,411 participants, and among those, 617 graduated.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Exceptional efforts were made to rapidly increase safety protocols, distribute hardware, and improve internet and software practices to limit the interruption of services during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Judges quickly received training and support to transition to telephonic team meetings and court proceedings, treatment providers began using telehealth services, and probation officers were able to telephonically monitor drug testing and complete check-ins. Courts have also been holding telephonic graduations for participants who have

maintained sobriety during these trying times.

Despite the great work of staff, treatment courts served many less participants due to policy changes for law enforcement, courthouse and facility shut downs, illness, and quarantining that has limited new referrals or hampered treatment court processes.

MEDICAID EXPANSION

Medicaid was expanded on January 1, 2020, and the impact on state treatment funds is being closely monitored. In May, 55% of treatment court participants were being funded by non-ISC funds, primarily Medicaid funding. As the impact of Medicaid expansion is continuing to be assessed, the courts are also engaging in a reassessment of service capacity, including the possibility of increasing participant numbers and providing additional services critical to success, such as residential and recovery support services.

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS

In 2020, the Idaho Supreme Court adopted the Idaho Treatment Court Best Practice Standards and a quality assurance plan that will be applied to all Idaho adult treatment courts beginning in the spring of 2021. These processes incorporate observation and feedback from ISC staff as well as peers to increase courts' alignment with best practices. A separate set of best practice guidelines was adopted for juvenile treatment courts.

For more information about Idaho treatment courts, visit: annualreport.isc.idaho.gov

