

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Mental Health Court services consolidated
into one court as part of efficiency effort.**

Delaware Mental Health Court services are changing, but they are not being reduced, as part of an overall efficiency re-organization. Effective on Dec. 1, the Court of Common Pleas and the Superior Court launched a unified statewide adult Mental Health Court. Previously both the Court of Common Pleas, which handles misdemeanor cases, and the Superior Court, which handles felony cases, each had their own problem-solving court that focused on defendants with mental health issues. The new, unified court now handles both the caseloads jointly, overseen by Superior Court.

By combining both courts into one, the result will be a more effective and efficient allocation of resources for the court system and will better address the particularized needs of persons with severe mental health issues in the criminal justice system, thereby improving outcomes. Combining the courts will also allow the Court system to develop and maintain consistent, predictable and measurable statewide standards for adults with mental health issues in the criminal justice system and ensure that the Mental Health Court is following the best, evidence-based practices statewide. The move will also ensure that the court operates in a manner that respects the needs of key agency partners such as Probation and Parole and TASC (Treatment Access Center), allowing them to attend a single proceeding rather than attend similar proceedings on different days in different courts.

Superior Court President Judge Jan R. Jurden stressed that this change will not mean a reduction in the availability of services that were previously offered through the Court of Common Pleas Mental Health Court. The change follows an efficiency review of all of Delaware's problem-solving courts.

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