



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Four to graduate from Preston County Drug Court

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KINGWOOD, W.Va. – Supreme Court Chief Justice Brent D. Benjamin will attend a ceremony honoring four adults who are graduating from the Preston County Drug Court at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5, on the third floor of the Preston County Courthouse, 101 W. Main St., Kingwood.

The Preston County Drug Court Program opened in 2009. It handles post-plea and probation violation cases. It is an intense, multi-disciplinary drug abuse treatment program available to non-violent offenders with drug and/or alcohol problems. The multi-disciplinary treatment team consists of Preston County Circuit Judge Lawrance Miller Jr., the Drug Court Coordinator, the Sheriff's Department, the Department of Health and Human Resources, the Community Corrections Program, probation office, the prosecutor's office, the public defender's office, and treatment officials.

West Virginia has a growing network of adult and juvenile drug courts, which are intensive supervision probation programs.

Juvenile drug court participants are usually in the program for six to eight months. Initially, a participant meets with the drug court judge weekly and a probation officer several times per week. Juvenile drug court is intended for youths who are at risk of becoming addicted, not those who are already addicted.

Adult drug courts include those who already are addicted. Participants complete a treatment program of no less than twelve months. They are required to attend group and individual counseling, to take drug tests multiple times per week, to perform community service work, to participate in education programs, and to work on individualized rehabilitation plans as directed. They meet with probation officers frequently and see the drug court judge at least weekly.

The average annual cost incurred by the state for one adult drug court participant is approximately \$7,100 compared to \$18,000 in jail or \$25,000 in prison. About 10 percent of drug court graduates return to jail compared to 80 percent of drug offenders who have not gone through drug court programs.

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