



Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

News

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Justice Benjamin to speak to legislators about drug-free babies

For immediate release

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Supreme Court Justice Brent D. Benjamin will speak to the House Committee on Crimes Against Children at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, June 17, about the success of pregnant women who participate in drug courts in West Virginia.

The meeting will be in the House Government Organization Committee Room on the Second Floor, Room 215E, of the West Virginia Capitol. This is not an interim committee; it is a free-standing house committee.

There have been more than seventy babies born drug-free to women participating in drug courts since January 2011. Of those, ten were born to participants in juvenile drug courts. Each is a unique achievement and represents great hope, according to Justice Benjamin.

Adult drug court programs also have included several men who have become drug-free fathers due to their participation.

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 courts are 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 and often up to two years. They are required to maintain sobriety, 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.

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