

Northern Hills Drug Court

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Northern Hills Drug Court Mission Statement

The Northern Hills drug Court's mission is to increase community safety, foster healthy families, and proficiently utilize public funds. This will be accomplished by streamlining and coordinating services to drug offenders and their families, increasing long term abstinence by holding drug offenders accountable and ultimately reducing drug crimes and drug involved crimes.

The Judge in charge of Drug Court



My name is Judge Percy. I grew up in the Lead/Deadwood area. I left to attend college and law school and returned to the Black Hills to practice law in 1994. I was appointed as the Magistrate Judge for the Fourth Judicial Circuit in the Spring of 2006. I joined the drug court committee soon thereafter. The committee had been working for nearly two years before I joined. They had done so much work in that time.

I was fortunate enough to attend drug court training in Los Angeles, California with the designated drug court team in the fall of 2006. I left the training feeling convinced of its effectiveness and more certain than ever that the traditional methods being employed were not working. "I am excited to be part of this hard working team."

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August, 2007

Re: Northern Hills Drug Court Program

To: Community Members of the Fourth Judicial Circuit

South Dakota is the last state in the nation to provide a Drug Court as a sentencing option for individuals who commit crimes substantially related to their addiction to an illegal substance. The South Dakota Unified Judicial System has chosen the Fourth Judicial Circuit to pilot a Drug Court Program.

The use of illegal drugs, especially methamphetamine, has a negative impact on the person addicted to the illegal drug, the family and the community. By providing a Drug Court as a sentencing option, the Fourth Circuit is working to repair the damage done to the individual by providing treatment in the community, intense supervision and judicial oversight. When the individual is provided treatment in the community, the family unit is kept intact. This enables the family to participate in the treatment, court process and reduces the family's reliance on state programs. The community benefits by having the participant employed, paying taxes and learning to be drug free.

The Unified Judicial System is proud of the Fourth Circuit's prosecutors, defense counsel, drug counselors, probation officers and judges who came together to create and establish the Northern Hills Drug Court Program. This program would not have been created without their support and cooperation. This program will achieve the long term goal of breaking the cycle of addiction and restoring our citizens to their communities healthy, productive and drug free.

Please join me in supporting the Northern Hills Drug Court Program.

Sincerely,

Hon. David Gilbertson
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Prosecutor

My name is Jesse Sondreal . I am the State's Attorney in Meade County. I have worked as the State's Attorney for the last four years.

In those four years I have observed a dramatic increase in the number of arrests, convictions and supervision violations attributed to methamphetamine abuse. It became increasingly frustrating for me to see offenders come through my office in what is known as the "revolving door syndrome".

I reviewed the research associated with the Drug Court program, and became an active member of the coalition that brought the Drug Court Program to South Dakota. I attend meetings, trainings, and review all arrests in Meade County for the possibility of an offender being appropriate for the drug court. Much of time that I devote to Drug Court is after hours or on the weekends.

For me it is a worthwhile use of my time, for in the long term it cuts down on the number of offenders coming back through my office on new charges, or probation violations. This program in the long term will cost the tax payers less, and decrease the recidivism rate of drug offenders. It's a win, win program for Meade County.



Drug Court is Operational September 4, 2007.

Cristi Habermann
Drug Court Coordinator

September 4, 2007, is a monumental day for the State of South Dakota and the Unified Judicial System. After two years of hard work on the part of many agencies and individuals their dreams of a felony Drug Court are coming to fruition.

As the Drug Court Coordinator, I am proud to lead the Drug Court into the next phase of development. Throughout the summer, the team and I have been preparing documents that will ensure the participant's progress can be monitored, and data collection can be easily gathered.

As we prepare for our first day in court and our first month of supervision we know there will be bumps in the road to overcome. Yet, it is with great excitement I look forward to those days. Each day will bring new challenges to our team and our participants. We will solve them together, and continue on with our goal of making the communities in the 4th Circuit safer

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: MEADE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

DAY: SEPTEMBER 4, 2007

TIME: 1:00 P.M.

First session of Drug Court.

SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: ABC LUNCH FORUM

DAY: OCTOBER 9, 2007

TIME: 11:00-1:00 PM

Drug Court presentation with question and answer period after lunch. RSVP to Kara Graveman@cps@rushmore.com

SPECIAL EVENT

PLACE: MAIN STREET STURGIS, SOUTH DAKOTA

DAY: OCTOBER 19, 2007

TIME: 3:15 P.M.

Red Ribbon Parade. Drug Court will decorate a float to have in the parade. Volunteers encouraged to help and attend the parade.

Law Enforcement Partner

My name is Ron Merwin, I am the Sheriff in Meade County. I have 23 years of law enforcement experience and currently operate an 80-bed jail. My role is to review a potential client's records and determine from a safety and security standpoint if they would be good candidates for the program. My office will not only provide in-house residential services, but assist with drug testing, curfew, checks, and occasional back up on home visits. I am excited to see a program we worked so hard for, begin its first month of operation.

Our Treatment Provider

Northern Hills Alcohol and Drug Services is very excited to begin providing Intensive Outpatient Treatment to Drug Court Participants. Participants will be included with the regular IOP group but will receive additional services with regards to increased group and individual counseling time. We know that community based treatment is effective, especially with the additional wrap-around services and supervision by Drug Court. This allows individuals to remain in their communities while developing the skills necessary to live responsible lives.

Mary Wood Fossen, Director

About the Defense Attorney

My name is Bruce Hubbard, I have represented criminal defendants for the past 31 years. I have seen the effects that the use of controlled substances has had on my clients, as well as their families. I have become increasingly concerned with the widespread use of methamphetamine which we have seen in this area over the past 10-15 years. Methamphetamine is a highly addictive, toxic substance which ruins lives and breaks up the family structure. We are seeing the adverse affects of methamphetamine, not only in criminal court, but in family court and in abuse and neglect proceedings. Drug addiction costs all of us as taxpayers, because we have to pay for the incarceration of the abuser and the social services to the family.

When I was asked to assist in setting up a drug court in this Circuit, I agreed without hesitation. I sincerely believe that, if possible, drug abusers should be treated rather than incarcerated. The drug court mechanism will allow for supervision of the individual, as well as his or her family. In addition to treatment, the drug court team can assist the individual and the family in obtaining jobs, housing, education, and medical care available in the community. Through strict monitoring and treatment, I believe that we can literally turn peoples' lives around and make them productive tax paying citizens.

It has been about two years since we had our first meeting to talk about setting up a drug court. Since that time, we have obtained both state and federal funding, have hired a coordinator, court service officer, and secretary, and will be starting the drug court sessions in early September. I am very proud to serve as the defense attorney on the drug court team. I am looking forward to the start of the drug court sessions.

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