



## News Release

FROM: Chambers of the Chief Judge  
19th Judicial Circuit  
Lake County  
Waukegan, Illinois 60085-4359

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Waukegan, Illinois

### LAKE COUNTY PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS RECEIVES CERTIFICATION

The 19th Judicial Circuit received notification from Marcia M. Meis, Director of the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, that the Supreme Court of Illinois reviewed and approved Lake County's Certification of Drug, Mental Health, and Veterans Treatment and Assistance Courts.

In 2005, Drug Court was established as a component of the Therapeutic Intensive Monitoring (TIM) Court. In 2007, Mental Health Court was started and, in 2011, the Veterans Treatment and Assistance Court was established. The mission of the TIM program is to reduce crime, enhance public safety, and reduce jail populations by providing a comprehensive treatment and supervision plan. With court oversight and accountability, problem-solving court participants can achieve and maintain recovery, become contributing members of their communities, and dramatically decrease their risks of recidivism. Each component of TIM Court has an established multidisciplinary team consisting of treatment professionals, judges, probation officials, and assistant state's attorneys and assistant public defenders that provide wrap-around services, which include the intensive monitoring of defendants who are in the criminal justice system as a result of substance abuse, mental health, or co-occurring disorders.

"This certification by the Illinois Supreme Court is quite an honor, as it validates our policies and procedures and recognizes the countless hours spent by our dedicated teams, led by Judge Christopher Stride, myself, and our Probation Directors, Rose Gray (retired) and Steve Fabbri. This certification allows our courts to continue to assist those facing their addictions and addressing their needs in a supportive, accountable way, using evidence-based models that provide long-term success for our clients. It is something to be celebrated and it would not have happened without our wonderful teams and the tireless work they do with our clients," said Circuit Judge Christen L. Bishop, presiding judge of Lake County's Specialty Courts.

Lake County's Drug Court was formed after a committee of officials recognized that a substantial number of high-risk addicted felons engaged in a continual pattern of criminal behavior to support their addiction. Drug Court targets offenders who have not responded to conventional criminal justice approaches. Since its inception, Lake County has had 222 participants, and 78 of those clients have completed the requirements and graduated from Drug Court.

The mission of the 19th Judicial Circuit Court Mental Health Court program is to promote community safety by reducing recidivism and improving the quality of life for people, whose criminality is driven by a serious mental illness, through judicial interaction and therapeutic intervention. Lake County has had 225 participants, and 104 of those clients have completed the requirements and graduated from Mental Health Court.

Stakeholders determined a need for a Veteran's based program with Lake County being home to the Naval Station Great Lakes and the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, drawing a current population of veterans of over 39,000. A significant population of permanent and transient

active duty and reserve members of the armed forces suffer from combat-related problems, such as alcohol/drug addiction, mental illness, posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and military sexual trauma will increase. As a result, these war-related illnesses may contribute to escalated suicide attempts, arrests, incarceration, divorce, domestic violence, homelessness, and despair. Lake County has had 149 participants, and 84 of those clients have completed the requirements and graduated from VTAC.

“Congratulations to the team and the leadership provided by the Veterans Administration (VA) and our Adult Probation unit. They will never get enough credit for all they do for our veterans with their steady hands, compassion, adherence to evidence-based practices, and support from the incredible mentors. I am so proud to have been a part of this program. Our VTAC team will never lose their passion for helping this wonderful population of justice-involved vets,” said Circuit Judge (and former presiding judge of the 19th Judicial Circuit’s Specialty Courts) Christopher R. Stride.

Lake County’s Problem Solving Courts are comprised of members of the 19th Judicial Circuit’s Judiciary, Lake County’s Adult Probation and Psychological Services, the Lake County Sheriff’s Office, the Lake County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Lake County Public Defender’s Office, Veteran Administration representatives, and treatment providers from the Lake County Health Department, Nicasa, Haymarket, and more. The teams meet weekly before court to discuss each participant’s progress in a non-adversarial forum. Attendance and participation in treatment is discussed along with compliance with the conditions of the program.

“Congratulations to your problem-solving court team members. On behalf of the Court, I commend Lake County for implementing evidence-based practices proven to provide participants with necessary treatment and community interventions to reduce the risk of recidivism while enhancing public safety,” said Ms. Meis.

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