News for Immediate Release

November 2026

Mercer County Treatment Courts Earn Pennsylvania Supreme Court Certification

HARRISBURG, PA – Mercer County Common Pleas Judge Ronald D. Amrhein, Jr. announced today that the county Treatment Court has officially earned certification from the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Certification marks an important step for the county's justice system. It shows that these programs use proven methods and deliver high-quality services, resulting in higher recovery rates for participants and helping them build stable, productive lives.

"This certification affirms that our program meets the highest standards of effectiveness and care," Judge Ronald D. Amrhein, Jr. said. "Treatment court works because it brings probation officers, treatment providers, and the court together with one shared goal: helping participants achieve lasting sobriety. I am deeply grateful to our staff and community partners whose hard work made this recognition possible."

Treatment court programs help eligible people get treatment and support as they prepare to return to their communities. In Mercer County, these certified courts connect participants with jobs, housing, treatment, and other needed services.

Treatment courts aim to help people change through treatment instead of sending them to jail. Judges are more involved, and participants receive close supervision and access to the services they need.

In Mercer County, judges, probation officers, treatment providers, and other professionals work as a team. Together, they help participants build sober, productive lives and create a sense of shared purpose and trust.

Pennsylvania's first drug court opened in Philadelphia in 1997, starting a strong statewide movement. Since then, programs have expanded to include DUI courts, juvenile drug courts,

veterans courts and mental health courts. This growth shows our courts' commitment to meeting the needs of different groups.

Today, Pennsylvania has more than 136 treatment courts. These courts help people with substance use, mental health, and co-occurring disorders work toward recovery and build support in their communities. Pennsylvania leads by building partnerships and investing significant resources in these programs.

Editor's Note:

Mercer County's Treatment Court program began in February 2019 as an alternative to traditional sentencing for non-violent offenders struggling with substance use. The program identifies eligible participants, assesses their needs and creates individualized treatment plans. Using proven, evidence-based practices, it provides intensive treatment, close supervision, and regular interaction with a judge.

Working together as a team, the treatment court professionals address participants' treatment and community needs while holding them accountable. The program runs for at least 24 months, with progress based on meeting program goals and following treatment plans. Instead of serving time in jail, participants complete their sentence at home under electronic monitoring.

# # #

Media Contact: Kimberly Bathgate, 717-576-4373