Administrative Office of the Courts

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Doña Ana County Magistrate DWI Court receives gold certification

Las Cruces, NM –Doña Ana County Magistrate DWI Treatment Court, the first DWI treatment court in the nation, received a "Gold" Certification for their program from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Department for Therapeutic Justice (DTJ) during a ceremony earlier this week.

The treatment court certification process assesses the alignment of treatment court programs with the NM Treatment Court Standards adopted by the state Supreme Court. During the three-month certification process, the DTJ reviews the program's policies, procedures, documents, professional development of team members, and team member surveys. Areas of alignment, as well as potential gaps, are identified and addressed. To achieve a "Gold" level certification, treatment courts must meet 100% of mandatory standards and 95% of the recommended standards. The Doña Ana County Magistrate DWI Treatment Court is one of only four NM treatment courts to receive the "Gold" certification, meeting 97% of the recommended standards.

"Treatment courts have stayed on the cutting edge of justice reform for decades and are the most studied justice intervention ever, but they are only effective as long as they are operating correctly," said AOC DTJ Senior Statewide Program Manager Robert Mitchell. "Certification allows court programs to measure alignment with best practice standards and identify opportunities for improvement."

Sergeant Thaddeus Allen of the Las Cruces Police Department and defense attorney Mark Gemoets, two longstanding team members of the DWI treatment court, were recognized for their contributions to the program during the ceremony. Sgt. Allen has been with the treatment court for 12 years and is the community contact outside of the treatment court for participants. Mr. Gemoets counsels participants in non-compliance

issues and reviews the participant handbook with all new participants before their first treatment court session. Mr. Gemoets has served with the Dona Ana County Magistrate DWI Treatment Court for 11 years.

"The gold certification demonstrates the Doña Ana Magistrate DWI Treatment Court program's implementation and alignment with the New Mexico Treatment Court Standards and the National Best Practices at one of the highest levels attainable," said Doña Ana Magistrate DWI Treatment Court Program Coordinator Carmen Florez-Lucero. "It highlights the knowledge, dedication, commitment and passion invested into the program by each team member to create an environment for success and a path to recovery for each individual participant."

A participant of the year-long program graduated during the ceremony as well.

DWI Treatment Court, also known as DWI Drug Court, is a post-conviction court system with the goal to use the drug court model to address the root cause of impaired driving – alcohol and other substance misuse. A judge and a team of professionals, including treatment providers, prosecutors and public defenders and law enforcement oversee offenders with alcohol and drug addiction. The yearlong programs treat offenders' addictions while holding them accountable through frequent drug tests, probation visits and judicial hearings.

State Supreme Court Chief Justice C. Shannon Bacon proclaimed July 26, 2023 as Dona Ana County Magistrate DWI Treatment Court Gold Certification Day in New Mexico and encouraged all state courts in New Mexico to celebrate the accomplishments of all Treatment Courts.

To learn more about the certification process for treatment courts, DWI Treatment Court and the Department for Therapeutic Justice, visit nmcourts.gov .

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From left to right: Judge G. Alexander Rossario, ADA Coordinator Amber Castro, County Compliance Officers Luis Armando Garcia and Liz Ontiveros, Doña Ana County Magistrate DWI Treatment Coordinator Carmen Florez Lucero, Peak Clinician Cynthia Perez, Peak Director Gustavo Garay-Vidal, Defense Attorney Mark Gemoets, Surveillance Officer Brian De la O and Las Cruces Police Department Sergeant Thaddeus Allen.