



## Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan



701 COLEMAN A. YOUNG MUNICIPAL CENTER • 2 WOODWARD AVE • DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48226-3413

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Subject: Wayne County set to launch Juvenile Mental Health Court**

**Detroit, Michigan, November 9, 2015** – Wayne County is scheduled to launch its new Juvenile Mental Health Court on January 1, 2016. The Juvenile Mental Health Court (JMHC) is a specialized court designed to identify youth with mental health issues and divert them from the formal court docket. The JMHC is focused on connecting juvenile offenders with mental health problems and their families to community-based treatment and services, to avoid out-of-home placement for the youth. According to Chief Judge Robert J. Colombo, Jr., "The Third Judicial Circuit Court is proud to establish a Juvenile Mental Health Court. Our goal is to timely address mental health issues. This will redirect a life trajectory, avoid future contact with the criminal justice system, and generate well-adjusted and productive citizens."

The goals of the JMHC are to reduce the number of youth who reoffend and increase their adherence to appropriate treatment for their mental health concerns. Court staff and mental health professionals at the Court's Clinic for Child Study will screen and assess participants and develop appropriate treatment plans for the juveniles and their families.

The Clinic for Child Study will provide home-based therapy for the juveniles and their families several times per week. Status review hearings will be held weekly with Judge Edward Joseph, who will preside over the JMHC and interact with the youth regularly. The treatment team, consisting of the Court staff, Clinic staff, and community mentors and treatment providers will also attend these weekly review hearings. "We are thrilled to have the opportunity to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children," said Judge Joseph. "The Third Circuit Court's Juvenile Mental Health Court program will provide intensive mental health services, combined with weekly court oversight, using an in-home therapy protocol. We really appreciate the support of our program from both the Michigan Supreme Court, along with our numerous community partners here in Wayne County."

At the status review hearings, the youth's compliance with the treatment plan and other provisions of the court order will be reported to Judge Joseph by the family and professionals. Compliance will be encouraged with rewards and incentives. Noncompliance will result in graduated sanctions as determined by the Judge. The review hearing will also be the place to revise the treatment plan and other provisions of the order.



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Successful completion of the JMHC program will culminate in a graduation ceremony attended by the participants, their families, court staff, and community partners. Most youth are expected to take 9-12 months to complete the program requirements. Richard Smart, Juvenile Court Deputy Court Administrator, sums it up when he says, "We are excited about the opportunity that we have to serve all the needs of the children that come before us, including their mental health needs. The Juvenile Mental Health Court will allow us to provide the services that our children need to help them have better lives."



**The Third Judicial Circuit** is the largest circuit court in Michigan with three operating divisions. The Third Circuit Court has jurisdiction over Civil, Criminal, and Family matters arising in the County of Wayne. The National Center for State Courts has cited the Third Circuit Court as one of the model urban courts in the United States for case flow management and the timely disposition of the Court's docket. For more information, visit [www.3rdcc.org](http://www.3rdcc.org).