


LESSONS LEARNED
FROM 10 YEARS OF THE
ASHTABULA COUNTY
DRUG COURT
PROGRAM

OCTOBER 12, 2018

HISTORY OF DRUG COURTS



Nationwide,
more than 80%
of crime is
fueled by drug
and alcohol use

Just putting
people in prison
does not work!

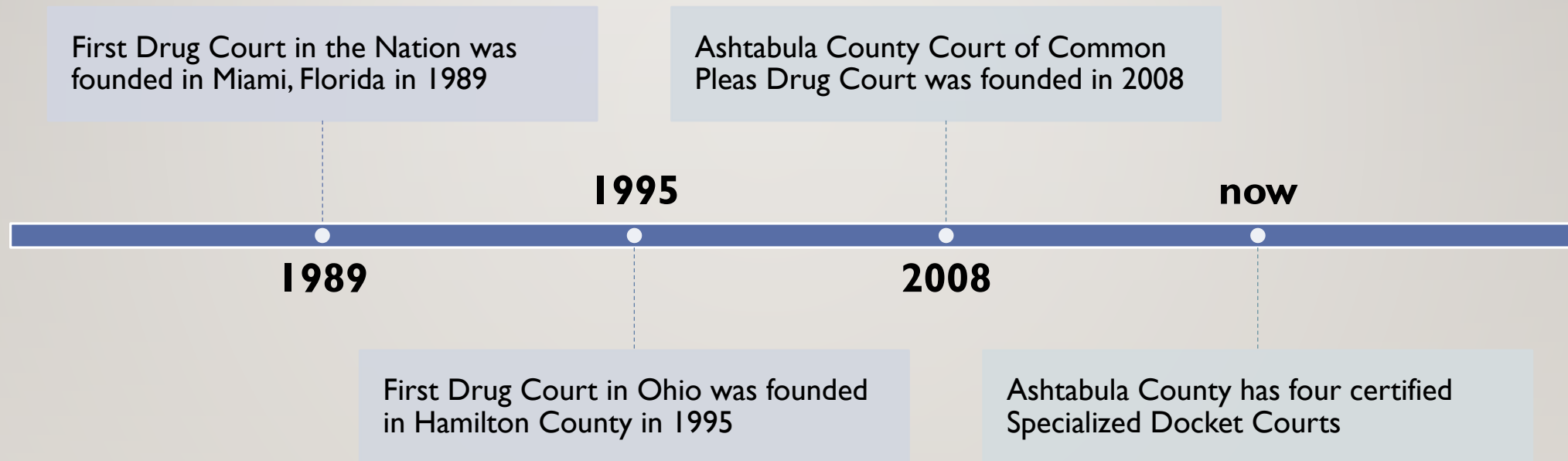
HISTORY OF DRUG COURTS

Ohio's prison population in 1974 was 8300, and reached an all time high in 2008 at 51,000



“We need to punish the offenders we are afraid of and treat the ones we are mad at”

HISTORY OF DRUG COURTS



WHAT IS A DRUG COURT?

A therapeutically oriented judicial approach to providing court supervision and appropriate treatment to offenders

A collaboration of treatment services, intensive court monitoring of the offender's progress, and immediate incentives and sanctions based upon the offender's compliance with court supervision and treatment orders



OHIO'S SPECIALIZED DOCKET COURTS

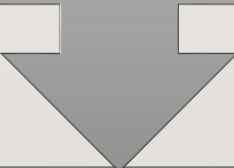
Ohio
currently has
230 certified
specialized
dockets



93 of these
courts are
drug courts

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS OF DRUG COURTS

Component #1: Drug Courts integrate alcohol and other drug court treatment services with justice case processing



Ashtabula County's program consists of participants who enter as a condition of

Diversion (Intervention in Lieu of Conviction)

Post Conviction (initially ordered to participate as a condition of probation)

Probation Violation or Judicial Release

Component #2: Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights

Ashtabula County's program:

- Prosecutor reviews the application and determines legal eligibility
- Defense Counsel makes sure that the applicant understands the programs rules and constitutional rights
- Participants have the right to have defense counsel attend treatment team meetings, the right to a hearing prior to a jail sanction and the right to a termination hearing
- Both the prosecutor and defense counsel make recommendations regarding sanctions

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS

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Component #3: Eligible offenders are identified early and promptly and placed in the drug court program

Ashtabula County's program:

"Eligible Offenders" are identified as "high risk and high needs" based upon a Pre-Sentence Investigation, screening with the Ohio Risk Assessment Tool and a chemical dependence assessment by Lake Area Recovery Center

By local court rule, diversion applicants must apply within 30 days of arraignment. Post conviction applicants must apply no later than the time of the guilty plea. Probation violations are now fast tracked by written waivers of hearings.

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS

Component #4: Drug Courts provide access to continuum of alcohol, drug and other related treatment and rehabilitation services

Ashtabula County's program:

Each participant receives a treatment plan based upon individual needs; the level of treatment is determined by level of risk of recidivating and the level of substance abuse

Treatment programs include:

Intensive Outpatient and Non Intensive Outpatient

Medically Assisted Treatment

Residential Treatment (Turning Point, N.E.O.C.A.P and R.S.A.T.)

If indicated, a Mental Health Assessment and Treatment

TREATMENT SERVICES, CONT.

Criminal Thinking Group

Relapse Prevention

Thinking for a Change

Trauma Group

Motivational Enhancement

Aggression Replacement Therapy

Seeking Safety



Component #5: Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing

Ashtabula County's program:

Random, frequent and observed

Each participant calls into an automated system everyday to find out if required to submit an urine screen

Each participant is randomly tested a minimum of 2 times per week

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS

Component #6: A coordinated strategy governs drug court responses to participants' compliance

Ashtabula County's Program:

Treat Sick Behavior = Treatment Adjustments

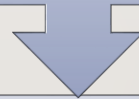
Punish Bad Behavior = Sanctions

Reward Good Behavior = Incentives

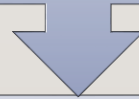
THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS

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Component #7: Ongoing judicial interaction with each drug court participant is essential



Ashtabula County's Program:



Status hearings held every Thursday morning at 9:00 a.m. in the courtroom of Judge Yost

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS

Component #8: Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness

Ashtabula County's Program:

Monitoring of Graduates by Drug Court Coordinator

Comprehensive survey of Graduates and Focus Groups

May 2016 Self Assessment



THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS

Component #9: Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective drug court planning, implementation and operation

Ashtabula County's Program:

Training received by the Ohio Supreme Court, the State Specialized Docket Conference and the National Drug Court Institute

Component #10: Forging partnerships among drug courts, public agencies and community based organization generates local support and enhances drug court program

The Advisory Committee consists of 9 members and includes Representatives from:

Job and Family Services

Private Defense Bar

Sheriff's Department

Samaritan House

Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

Kent State Ashtabula

ACMC

Two community members

THE TEN KEY COMPONENTS

STATISTICS OF THE ASHTABULA COUNTY FELONY DRUG COURT PROGRAM COVERING 10 YEARS

Approximately 500 drug court applications have been submitted:

200 were rejected from the program (did not meet legal or clinical criteria, or decided they did not wish to participate)

161 have successfully completed

76 have been unsuccessfully terminated

3 have been neutrally discharged

45 are currently in the program

15 are currently involved in the application and screening process



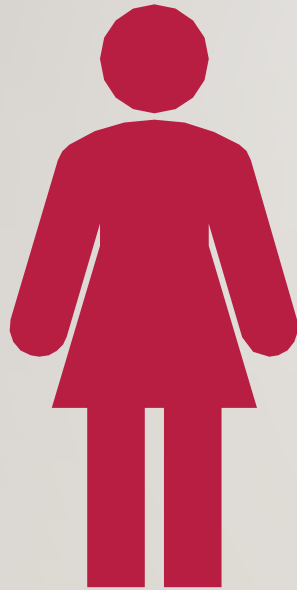
STATISTICS OF THE ASHTABULA COUNTY FELONY DRUG COURT PROGRAM COVERING 10 YEARS



Primary Drug of Choice:

- Heroin = 46%
- Methamphetamine = 18%
- Prescription Drugs (Opiates) = 7%
- Marijuana = 7%
- Cocaine = 6%
- Alcohol = 5%
- Other (Barbituates/Benzodiazepene/Inhalants) = 1%
- Unknown = 10%

STATISTICS OF THE ASHTABULA COUNTY FELONY DRUG COURT PROGRAM COVERING 10 YEARS



Gender and Race/Ethnic Background:

Men = 60%

Women = 40% (12 have been pregnant when entering the program or became pregnant during the program, and completed the program with healthy babies)

Caucasian = 91%

African American = 6%

Hispanic = 2%

Bi-Racial or Unknown = 1%

BREAKDOWN OF THE CURRENT 45 PARTICIPANTS

27 Males and 18 Females

44 Caucasian and 1 Bi-Racial

2 are 18 years of age

25 are in their 20's

15 are in their 30's

2 are in their 40's

1 in his 50's

Drug of Choice:

Heroin = 28

Meth = 14

Prescription Opiates = 1

Cocaine = 1

Xanax (Benzo) = 1

RECIDIVISM RATES OF GRADUATES

Recidivism = any new criminal charge, except traffic

Since 2010, 161 participants have successfully completed the program

Overall, 88 of these participants have had no further contact with the criminal justice system



RECIDIVISM RATES OF GRADUATES

The first two years are the most important!

From 2010 – 2015:

40% of those who completed program re-offended within the first two years

4% re-offended after a two year period

Past 3 years, recidivism rate dropped to 1%



RECIDIVISM ISSUES ADDRESSED IN 2016, AND SIGNIFICANT ENHANCEMENTS IMPLEMENTED



Added Mental Health

Added Medically Assisted Treatment

Added a phase focused on Maintenance

Added Trauma Group

RECIDIVISM SINCE 2016 ENHANCEMENTS

2016 – present:

Recidivism rate after the first year is at
25%

Recidivism rate after the second year
is at 6%

So far, Recidivism rate after two year
is 0%



ALSO IMPROVED RATE OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION

2008 – 2015:

52% of those who entered the program successfully completed

2016- Present:

59% of those who entered have successfully completed the program

Also an increase of 71/2% in number of participants



MOST RECENT ENHANCEMENTS

Commencement Interviews

Alumni Group

Restorative Justice

More Comprehensive Surveys of
Graduates

Focus Groups of Current Participants



WHAT HAVE THE PARTICIPANTS TOLD US?



What works well in Drug Court?

- The Accountability
- Commitment by Team to people in Drug Court
- It's a “chance giver”, dodging a felony or receiving a second chance to not go to prison
- Introduction to programs that are helpful

WHAT HAVE THE PARTICIPANTS TOLD US?

What can be improved?

- Fairness of sanctions
- Child care during treatment
- Educating families about Drug Court
- More Smart Recovery Meetings and no Sponsors
- Policy regarding medications



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2019

Discussions about reaching out specifically to our minority groups to speak about the program

Discussions regarding an assessment of the overall felony population of Ashtabula County in order to identify whether everyone receives the same opportunities, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, physical or mental disability, religion or socioeconomic status

Would like the Drug Program to speak to your group?
Contact Stephanie Belconis, Drug Court Coordinator at
440-576-9903

DRUG COURT PROGRAM WRITTEN MATERIALS

Program materials are available on the
Ashtabula County Court System
webpage under the Court Office tab



SPECIAL THANKS TO

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