



Misdemeanor Mental Health Court Team Training

Directory of Resources

Program Coordinator. Georgette Corley
(404) 613-5419

Court Service Providers

River Edge Behavioral Health river-edge.org
265 Boulevard NE, Atlanta, GA 30312
(404) 665-8600

CHRIS 180 chris180.org
(404) 486-9034

Program Partners

Office of the Solicitor General
(404) 612-4800

Office of the Public Defender
(404) 612-5200

Community Resources

Mental Health America of Georgia mhageorgia.org
(770) 741-1481

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

(800) 273-8255

Crisis Text Line

Reach a trained counselor by texting

“GA” to 741-741

National Alliance on Mental Illness www.nami.org
(800) 950-NAMI (6264)

Veterans Crisis Line www.veteranscrisisline.net
1 (800) 273-8255 press 1



Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk and State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter with the MMC Team and Graduates



Positive Community Impact

- Strengthens rehabilitation connection between the court system and the mental health community
- Encourages safe and supported release of participants from the jail into the community, including housing and behavioral health treatment prior to release
- Enhances the interconnection of participants, crime victims and our community
- Reduces the incarceration and re-arrest of individuals with a mental health diagnosis
- Increases community confidence in the criminal justice system
- Improves the overall quality of life for the entire community

“Graduation allows a participant’s case to be sealed. This simple action restores our most vulnerable, opening doors of employment and housing once believed lost.” – Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk

FULTON COUNTY MISDEMEANOR MENTAL HEALTH COURT

Presiding Judges
Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk
State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter

160 Pryor Street SW, Suite J3-G47
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 613-5419

Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

A Joint Misdemeanor Justice
Project, housed in the Magistrate
Court of Fulton County



Who Are We

The Misdemeanor Mental Health Court is a voluntary court program to divert and support eligible misdemeanor citizen-defendants with mental health concerns. As Justice Partners, we recognize our duty to:

- Protect the public through intensive participant supervision;
- Reduce incarceration and recidivism of individuals with serious mental illness;
- Link participants with mental health and other services;
- Encourage participants to adhere to program conditions and requirements; and
- Improve the likelihood of ongoing success through treatment, access to housing and connections with critical supports.

Misdemeanor Mental Health Court participants meet specific medical and legal criteria to qualify for participation. We accept participants with cases from the jail, identified through First Appearance, as well as those participants from State Court, identified at Plea and Arraignment. Once an assessment determines that an accused is competent and willing to engage in the process and the current criminal charge is connected to a diagnosed behavioral health concern, the participant is further screened by the team for admission.

"Incredible program! Mental Health is key to sustaining successful communities... This program deserves to be expanded broadly." - Attorney Joshua Schiffer

Referral Process

The Misdemeanor Mental Health Court team reviews each potential participant to ensure that referred cases meet program criteria. Decisions to accept or terminate a referral are made on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with the judge, solicitor general, public defender and mental health professionals. A participant may, at any time, opt out of the program and resume traditional prosecution. The team's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is fundamental in our procedures and policies, including referrals, assessments, team training, and participant incentives and sanctions. MMC believes it has a responsibility to embrace inclusion for its participants and team, and to treat everyone included with dignity and respect at all times.

Individual Service Plan

An Individual Service Plan is created for each participant. This plan ensures the participant has the support necessary to complete the program successfully and is modified as the participant's situation warrants. Plans are developed to last the length of the program, which is no less than 12 months, with at least three months ongoing support following graduation.

"Misdemeanor Mental Health Court is truly the light at the end of the tunnel for the participants, their families and our community. Where there has been darkness and little if any hope for supportive services, this Court has helped to fill that void." - State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter

Practices and Procedures

Once accepted, all participants attend the status calendar. This court check-in supports participants while their charges are pending. The court process follows:

- Flagged by pretrial staff, detention officer, public defender, or another observer at the jail
- Shared with the MMC Litigation Manager and Fulton County Behavioral Health Department staff
- Consent to participate signed by participant, defense counsel, and judge
- Interviewed by Behavioral Health team, connected to services for individual service plan, and discharge planning begins
- Participant appears in court as required by judge
- Once participant complies with treatment and does not reoffend, the case is dismissed on the motion of the prosecutor.
- Graduation ceremony celebrates successful program completion
- Aftercare provides follow-up and support.



Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk and State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter pictured with Magistrate Judges and Marshals