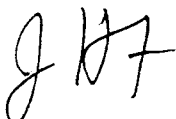


PRESS RELEASE

To: Local Media

From: Judge Fisher



Date: November 6, 2006

Re: Research Report Finds Adult Drug Court Reduces Substance Abuse and Recidivism, While Saving Taxpayer Dollars

A recently released report from NPC Research in Portland, Oregon, concluded that the Barry County Adult Drug Court was reducing substance abuse and crime in the community, while also saving taxpayer dollars. This report was commissioned by the Michigan Supreme Court, and NPC Research was hired to study the Adult Drug Court programs in Barry and Kalamazoo Counties.

The Barry County Adult Drug Court was started by the circuit court in 2001. I was alarmed by the high numbers of repeat drunk drivers who came before me and frustrated by the lack of success we had in helping these offenders change their lives. I saw the same pattern of repeated failure among nonviolent drug users. Clearly, what we had been doing with the traditional incarceration and probation response was not working well.

The NPC study found that drug test results showed that Drug Court participants consistently showed less drug use than the comparison group of non-participants and that participants in the Drug Court program were far less likely to be rearrested than non-participants. The study also concluded that the program had saved the community over \$350,000 in taxpayer costs over the two years studied.

I am elated that this report confirms what I have known for a long time: This program is very effective in addressing the problem of substance abuse in our community, and it has the unique characteristic of allowing our community to do the right thing to help people with these problems, while making our community safer and saving tax dollars. I also want to recognize the efforts of our Drug Court team, Drug Court director Jeff Westra, probation agents Sandra Miller and Jim Westra, therapist Connie Fast, defense attorney Thomas Dutcher, therapist Kori Zimmerman, and probation officer John Reed for their hard work on this program.

This program has been funded by state and federal grants up to this year, but eventually the County Commissioners will have to decide whether the \$200,000 annual cost of this program is a worthwhile investment. We thought the county was going to have to pay about 75% of the cost for the 2006-2007 fiscal year, but in September we were awarded an extra \$150,000 Justice Assistance Grant by the state. This, along with our \$40,000 Michigan Drug Court Grant, guarantees the program will continue until October 1, 2007, without any substantial cost to Barry County. At some point the county will have to assume some of the cost. This report should give them the information they need to make an informed decision.

Drug Court sessions are held in the circuit courtroom on Wednesdays at 4 p.m. and Thursdays at 11 a.m. They are open to the public.

**Barry County
Adult Drug Court
Outcome and Cost Evaluation
*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***



Submitted to:

**Michigan Supreme Court
State Court Administrative Office**

Submitted by:

**Gwen Marchand, M.S.
Mark Waller, B.A.
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September 2006



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

In the past fifteen years, one of the most dramatic developments in the movement to reduce substance abuse among the U.S. criminal justice population has been the spread of drug courts across the country. In a typical drug court program, participants are closely supervised by a judge who is supported by a team of agency representatives that operate outside of their traditional adversarial roles including addiction treatment providers, prosecuting attorneys, public defenders, law enforcement officers, and parole and probation officers who work together to provide needed services to drug court participants. “The emergence of these new courts reflects the growing recognition on the part of judges, prosecutors, and defense counsel that the traditional criminal justice methods of incarceration, probation, or supervised parole have not stemmed the tide of drug use among criminals and drug-related crimes in America” (Hora, Schma, & Rosenthal, 1999, p. 9).

In the drug treatment court movement, Michigan has been a pioneering force. The Michigan Community Corrections Act was enacted in 1988 to investigate and develop alternatives to incarceration. Four years later, in June 1992, the first women’s drug treatment court in the nation was established in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The Drug Court in Barry County began in 2001 as a response to the high number of drunk drivers coming before the court. Over time, the Barry County Adult Drug Court has emerged as a powerful force in the community in combating increasing jail and prison populations as well as social and public health problems stemming from a variety of substance abuse issues. In 2005, the Michigan Supreme Court, State Court Administrative Office contracted with NPC Research to perform outcome and cost evaluations of two Michigan adult drug courts; the Kalamazoo Adult Drug Treatment Court and the Barry County Adult Drug Court. This document describes the evaluation and results for the Barry County Adult Drug Court (BCADC).

There are three key policy questions that are of interest to program practitioners, researchers and policymakers that this evaluation was designed to answer.

1. Do drug treatment court programs reduce substance abuse?
2. Do drug treatment court programs reduce recidivism?
3. Do drug treatment court programs produce cost savings (in terms of avoided costs)?

Research Design and Methods

Information was acquired for this evaluation from several sources, including observations of court sessions and team meetings during site visits, key informant interviews, agency budgets and other financial documents. Data was also gathered from BCADC and other agency files and databases.

NPC Research identified a sample of participants who entered the BCADC from the implementation of the program through July 1, 2004 (allowing time for outcomes post program entry). A comparison group was identified from two sources (1) those individuals who were eligible for Drug Court at the time of implementation, but whom could not be admitted into the program due to capacity issues at startup and (2) individuals arrested on a Drug Court eligible

charge during the study period but who received traditional court processing for a variety of reasons (for example, failure to be referred, inability to meet program requirements, unwillingness to participate, or receiving a better “deal”). Both the participant and comparison group were examined through existing administrative databases for a period up to 24 months from the date of Drug Court entry. The two groups were matched on age, gender, ethnicity, prior drug and alcohol use history and criminal history including prior arrests and time in jail. Both groups were examined through existing administrative databases for a period up to 24 months from the date of Drug Court entry. The methods used to gather this information from each source are described in detail in the main report.

Results

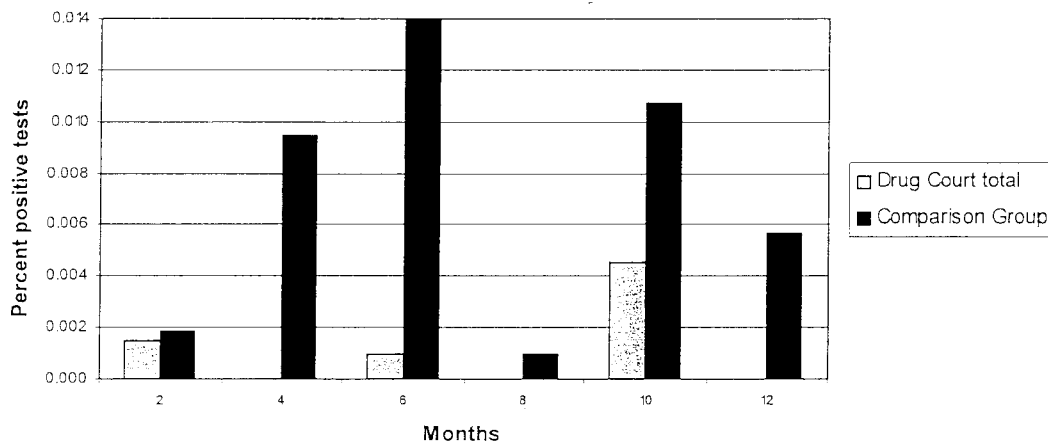
In order to best highlight the results of this evaluation, we can apply the three key policy questions listed above to the specific drug treatment court program in Barry County.

1. Did the Barry County Adult Drug Court reduce participant drug abuse?

Yes. BCADC participants consistently showed less drug use than the comparison group.

Figure 1 illustrates the percent of positive drug tests over time for the Drug Court and comparison groups. The participant group includes graduates, terminated participants, and active participants. This figure shows a consistently smaller percentage of positive drug tests for BCADC participants following program entry. In fact, for some time periods there are no positive drug tests for BCADC participants at all while positive drug tests for comparison group members remain much higher.

Figure 1. Percent of Positive Tests Over 12 Months for BCADC Participants and the Comparison Group



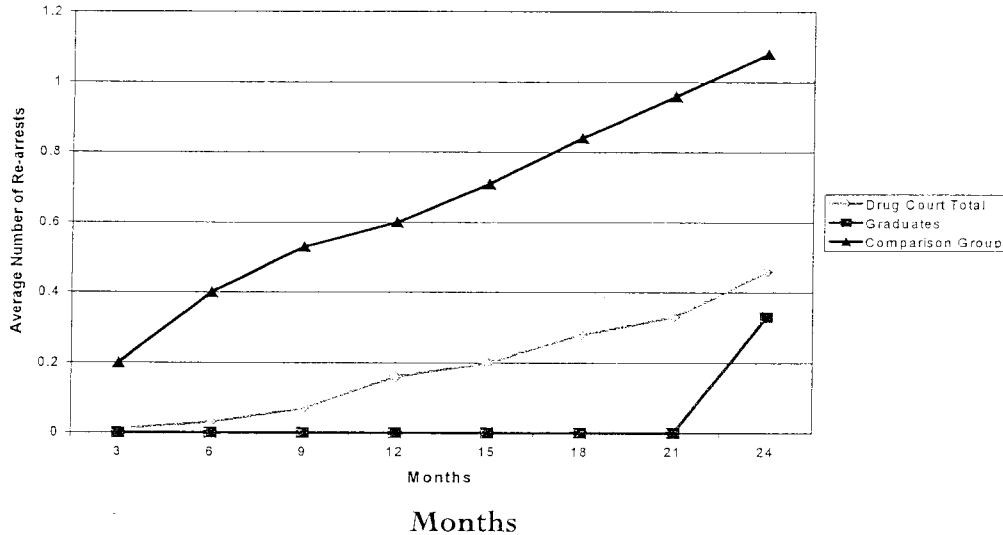
2. Did the Barry County Adult Drug Court reduce recidivism?

Yes. BCADC program participants were significantly less likely to be re-arrested than offenders who were eligible for the program but did not participate.

Barry County Adult Drug Court participants (regardless of whether they graduate from the program) were re-arrested less than half as often as comparison group members who were eligible for drug court but did not attend. Graduates were re-arrested approximately a third as

often as the comparison group, and overall were re-arrested very rarely. In fact, for the first 21 months after program entry, the drug court graduates did not commit any new offenses at all.

Figure 2. Average Number of Re-Arrests per Person Over 24



In addition, in the 24 months following entry to the Program, the recidivism rate for drug court participants was quite low. Only 4% of the graduates and 26% of the all Drug Court participants were re-arrested while 50% of the comparison group sample were re-arrested in the 2-year period. This is particularly impressive considering the BCADC is one of 11 “priority population” courts in the state that targets high-risk prison bound offenders.

3. Are there cost savings (avoided costs) that can be attributed to the BCADC program?

Yes. Due to positive outcomes for drug court participants (including fewer re-arrests, less probation time and fewer new court cases), there were substantial avoided costs for drug court participants.

Barry County Drug Court participants showed a cost savings of over \$3,000 per participant over a 2-year period. When this per participant savings is multiplied by the 108¹ offenders who have participated in the Drug Court Program since implementation (in May 2001), the total Program cost savings (for outcomes over a 24-month period) is **\$353,160**.

These cost savings are those that have accrued in just the two years since program entry. Many of these savings are due to positive outcomes while the participant is still in the program, so savings are already being generated from the time of entry into the program. If Drug Court participants continue to have positive outcomes in subsequent years (as has been shown in other drug courts, e.g., Carey et al., 2005; Finigan, Carey, and Cox 2006) then these cost savings can be expected to continue to accrue over time, repaying the program investment costs and providing further avoided costs to public agencies.

In sum, the Barry County Adult Drug Court was successful in decreasing participant drug abuse, reducing participant recidivism and producing cost savings for the taxpayer.

¹ As of March 2006, 108 offenders have entered and either graduated or been terminated from the program.

BARRY COUNTY ADULT DRUG COURT FACT SHEET

What are drug treatment courts?

The purpose of drug courts is to guide offenders identified as drug-addicted into treatment under intensive judicial supervision that will reduce drug dependence, improve the quality of life for them and their families and reduce recidivism.

In the drug treatment court movement, Michigan has been a pioneering force. The Michigan Community Corrections Act was enacted in 1988 to investigate and develop alternatives to incarceration. Four years later, in June 1992, the first women's drug treatment court in the nation was established in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The Drug Court in Barry County began in 2001. Over time, the Barry County Adult Drug Court has emerged as a powerful force in the community in combating increasing jail and prison populations as well as social and public health problems stemming from a variety of substance abuse issues.

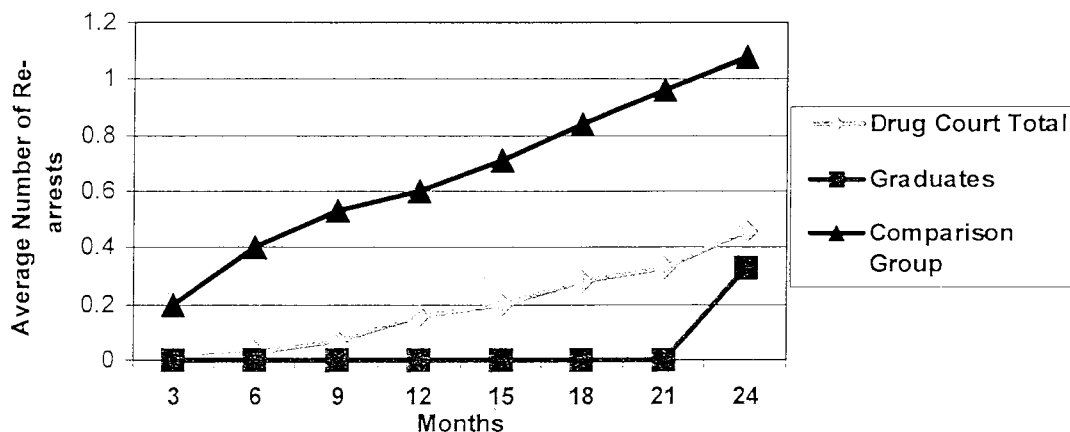
There are three key policy questions that are of interest to program practitioners, researchers and policymakers about drug treatment courts. A recent evaluation¹ (completed in October 2006) of the Barry County Adult Drug Court (BCADC) provided answers to the following three questions.

1. Do drug treatment courts reduce recidivism?

Yes. The BCADC program participants were significantly less likely to be re-arrested than offenders who were eligible for the program but did not participate.

Figure 1 shows that BCADC participants were re-arrested less than half as often as comparison group members who were eligible for drug court but did not attend. For the first 21 months after program entry, the drug court graduates did not commit any new offenses at all.

Figure 1. Average Number of Re-Arrests per Person Over 24 Months



¹ This study was performed by NPC Research, a nationally recognized firm in drug court research, under a contract with the Michigan Supreme Court, State Court Administrative Office.

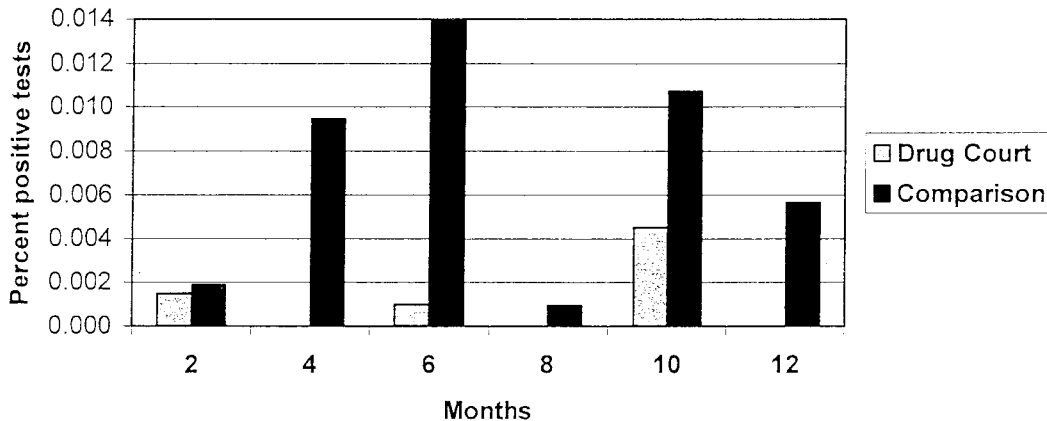
In addition, in the 24 months following entry to the Program, only 4% of the graduates and 26% of the all Drug Court participants were re-arrested while 50% of the comparison group sample were re-arrested in the 2-year period. This is particularly impressive considering the BCADC is one of 11 “priority population” courts in the state that targets high-risk prison bound offenders.

2. Do drug treatment courts reduce substance abuse?

Yes. BCADC participants consistently showed less drug use than the comparison group.

Figure 2 shows a consistently smaller percentage of positive drug tests for BCADC participants following program entry compared to offenders who were eligible for the BCADC program but did not participate. In fact, for some time periods there are no positive drug tests for BCADC participants at all.

Figure 2. Percent of Positive Tests Over 12 Months for BCADC Participants and the Comparison Group



3. Do drug treatment courts result in cost savings to the taxpayer?

Yes. Due to positive outcomes for drug court participants (including fewer re-arrests, less probation time and fewer new court cases), there were substantial cost savings due to BCADC participants.

Barry County Drug Court participants showed avoided costs of over \$3,000 per participant over a 2-year period. When this per participant savings is multiplied by the 108 offenders who have entered the Drug Court Program since implementation, the total Program cost savings over just a two year period is **\$353,160**.

These cost savings are those that have accrued in just the two years since program entry. Many of these savings are due to positive outcomes while the participant is still in the program, so savings are already being generated from the time of entry into the program. In sum, the Barry County Adult Drug Court was successful in decreasing participant drug abuse, reducing participant recidivism and producing cost savings for the taxpayer.