



Gambling Treatment Diversion Court

Update Report - April 9, 2020

Program Update

The Gambling Treatment Diversion Court continued to meet for court hearings every other week and for staff meetings once a month until the Governor's directive and Administrative Orders by the Chief Judge of the Eighth Judicial District Court to postpone all physical gatherings due to COVID-19.

Judge Cheryl Moss and her team sent out an email with a personalized video by Judge Moss to the participants on March 17th informing all participants and the team that GTDC is postponed until April 17th, which will take place by the court's video conferencing software, BlueJeans. The next physical court appearance will occur once all restrictions have been lifted.

The GTDC coordinator conducts weekly check-ins with all participants by email and phone. During these check-ins, participants are asked to discuss their current updates and any situations that may affect their ability to be compliant with the GTDC program. This includes how their jobs have been affected by COVID-19 and what precautions they are currently taking to stay safe. Additionally, the GTDC coordinator requests financial documents to continue to track restitution payments, spending, incoming, expenses, etc. as usual, with the expectation that there may be some changes due to the current state of things.

The GTDC coordinator reassures that participants continue to receive support and appropriate treatment for their Gambling Disorder. The coordinator speaks with the treatment providers for the participants frequently and encourage participants to connect with each other for peer support. Participants farther along in the program act as mentors to those who have been in the program for less time.

COVID-19 Program Precautions

Precautionary guidelines and actions have been implemented for the safety of GTDC participants. In addition to postponing physical court appearances and holding hearings by video conference, all treatment and ancillary service requirements have moved to telehealth sessions and virtual meetings. Drug testing has also been temporarily suspended but is allowed if participants choose to go. At this time, most are drug testing only once a month to meet program requirements anyway.

Additionally, participants are asked to provide proof that restitution amount is able to be paid but the court has not required participants to have to go down to the DA's Bad Check Unit to physically make the payment. Nonetheless, payment amount is closely tracked by the coordinator.

The safety and health of GTDC participants and team are of utmost importance and actions will be taken to maintain this as a priority.

The next GTDC court hearing is on April 17th by the court's video conferencing software, BlueJeans.