Drug Courts

Mark E. Spitzer, Judge
Grant Circuit Court
What are the best legislative answers to difficult problems in criminal justice?

• Evidence-Based Interventions
• Is it supported by valid research that demonstrates that it works in the real world?
What are Drug Courts?

- Special court dockets or calendars designed to treat individuals suffering from substance use disorders and give them the tools they need to change their lives
What are the *Characteristics* of Drug Courts?

- Collaborative and multidisciplinary
- Non-adversarial
- Impose accountability for bad behavior and incentivize positive behavior
- Therapeutic response to address drivers of criminal behavior
- Graduation results in diversion or dismissal of charges
Are Drug Courts Evidence-Based?

Yes!
How well do Drug Courts work?

• Drug Courts are proven to reduce recidivism by 8 to 14%, with the best drug courts reducing recidivism 35 to 80%
How well do Drug Courts work?

• Drug Courts have been proven to produce an average return on investment of $2 to $4 for every dollar invested
Who are Drug Courts Designed For?

- No First Offenders!
- High-risk, High Need Offenders
Primary substances of abuse for Drug Court Participants

- In Grant County, heroin and prescription opiates
- Drug Courts are proven effective in addressing opiate addiction
- Other popular substances of abuse: benzos, alcohol, meth, marijuana, cocaine
Drug Courts Across the Nation

- Over 3000 Drug Courts in the U.S., serving around 130,000 participants per year
- *But, in 2014, nearly half of the counties in the US did not have a drug court*
As a legislator, how can I support Drug Courts?

• Funding!
• Legislation encouraging certification and best practices
• Specific authorization legislation – only 60% of states and territories had authorization legislation in 2014
As a legislator, how can I support Drug Courts?

• Funding and support of drug court partners, like treatment facilities, halfway houses, supportive living, peer support, and other evidence-based interventions that drug courts use
Where do I get more information?

- NADCP.org
- NDCI.org
Sources

Questions?

• Judge Mark E. Spitzer
  • mspitzer@grantcounty.net