

Case Study: Yellowstone County, MT

Veterans Court Helps Alcohol-Dependent Veterans Re-enter Civilian Life

Veterans
Pretrial
Probation
Jail Alternative

Billings, MT – The Yellowstone County Veterans Treatment Court is a pre- and post-plea treatment court utilizing the Drug Court Model. It focuses on case management, addiction treatment, and accountability to help veterans with PTSD, chemical dependency, and other mental health issues cope after military service. Many clients receive suspended or even deferred sentences that result in dismissal after graduation.

The Court treats all issues holistically and helps veterans re-enter civilian life. Case management concentrates on life skills, parenting skills, living within a budget, housing, employment, mental health issues, and medication assistance. The Court offers a full continuum of addiction treatment including aftercare and relapse prevention.

The Court's target population is 40 clients annually. Clients pay \$30 a week toward program participation. Nearly 90% of clients are current on their payment of fines and fees.

District Judge Mary Jane Knisely held the first Yellowstone County Veterans Treatment Court session in February 2012. The Court celebrated its first graduates in May 2013.

How is SCRAM CAM Being Used?

Ninety-two percent of clients are dependent on alcohol and/or other drugs. The primary drug of choice is alcohol (90%); other dependencies include prescription medications and illicit drugs.

All clients are monitored for alcohol consumption using SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (CAM) for the first 90 days of the program. The Court also uses SCRAM CAM as a sanctioning tool when clients have consumed alcohol and by client request due to travel or relapse concerns.

Highlights of Success

- The program provides structure and accountability to veterans with mental health and addiction issues to help them re-enter civilian life.
- The Court has a 76% retention rate.
- For 90% of participants, alcohol is their drug of choice
- To-date veterans in the program have a 100% compliance rate.

SOBER DAYS: 100%

Outcomes

The Court serves mostly felons and currently has a 76% retention rate.

Ninety-nine percent of all of the drug and alcohol tests conducted have been negative.

Judge Mary Jane Knisely notes that SCRAM CAM has been a key component to helping program participants overcome their issues. "By making clients accountable and self-aware, treatment success has improved. SCRAM has been an extremely effective tool for our clients. The consistency serves an important purpose in a population who thrives on structure in many aspects of their life," she says.

"The interface between SCRAM and the Drug Court Case Management system is immeasurable. The team has 24/7 access to the results. The AMS back up resource and first line customer service are much appreciated."



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