



MEDIA TIP /// MEDIA TIP /// MEDIA TIP /// MEDIA TIP

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
Public Information
P.O. Box 53277
Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3277
Contact: Pam McKeown 405-522-5102

March 22, 2004

**DRUG COURT 'DAY AT THE CAPITOL'
TO HIGHLIGHT EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM**

Drug courts, a program that is saving state taxpayers millions of dollars that won't have to be spent on incarcerating non-violent offenders, will be the focus of a gathering tomorrow at the state capitol.

Coordinated by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, drug courts are an alternative to incarceration for certain non-violent drug offenders. Rather than sending these people to prison, the program redirects participants into a highly structured, judicially monitored treatment program. The average cost of drug court for one person averages about \$3,500 per year, compared with \$20,000 or more for prison.

Presently, drug courts are operational in 40 Oklahoma counties, with several more in the planning stages.

The capitol rally will bring together drug court coordinators, district attorneys, probation/parole officers, judges, substance abuse treatment providers and participants. *Some participants will be available for media interview, as well.*

WHEN: Tuesday, March 23, 8:30-11 a.m.

WHERE: State capitol, Room 419-A

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Pam McKeown, public information specialist, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, at **405-522-5102**.

Drug Court Facts and Figures

? Drug courts are saving Oklahoma taxpayers millions of dollars a year. For instance, the average daily cost per individual in 2002 was as follows: \$57.91 for an inmate in maximum security; \$50.22 for an inmate in medium security; \$49.53 for an inmate in minimum security; \$54.58 for an inmate in the community corrections system; and only \$4.82 for drug court participants.

? Drug court graduates have a marked increase in average monthly income, increasing from \$826 per month at entry to \$1,374 at graduation.

? Drug courts work. The number of clients receiving Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services-funded treatment services has risen 1,800 percent in five years, from only 78 in fiscal year 1998 to 1,485 in fiscal year 2002.

? Re-arrest rates of drug court graduates and traditional probationers differ significantly. The re-arrest rate after 12 months is 6.9 percent for drug court participants, compared with 17.4 percent for traditional probationers. After 24 months, the re-arrest rate for traditional probationers is nearly double, at 29 percent, compared with 14 percent for drug court participants.