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PRESS RELEASE

Trial Court Awarded Two Federal Grants to Expand Court-Based Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services for Specialty Courts in Boston and Springfield

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

7/28/2020

Executive Office of the Trial Court

Boston Municipal Court

District Court

Massachusetts Court System

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BOSTON, MA — Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey and Court Administrator Jonathan Williams today announced that the Trial Court has received two federal grants totaling $6 million from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide mental and behavioral health services within the Boston Municipal Court and the Springfield Drug Court. The $4 million grant to fund services in Boston and the $2 million grant for services in Springfield are among the largest federal grants ever received by the Massachusetts Trial Court.

“We appreciate this acknowledgment by SAMHSA of the strong foundation and reputation established by the Massachusetts Trial Court to serve community members in greatest need of support services,” said Chief Justice Carey. “The partnership with Boston Medical Center breaks new ground in providing the first demonstration of Assisted Outpatient Treatment in Massachusetts. The grant will fund more intensive and comprehensive services than are currently available for patients with serious mental illness who are criminally involved. The Springfield grant extends our successful partnership with UMass Medical School, applying their evidence-based MISSION model, a wrap-around treatment service for those with co-occurring disorders.”

“Grant funds assume increased significance during this time of fiscal uncertainty and enable the Trial Court to ensure the provision of services that would not otherwise be available,” said Trial Court Administrator Williams. “We are especially proud that Massachusetts was one of 17 projects funded by SAMHSA to expand the use of Assisted Outpatient Treatment.”

Specialty courts use a team approach led by the presiding judge and include probation officers, clinicians and treatment providers, prosecutors and defense counsel. Specialty courts combine intensive probation supervision and mandated participation in treatment with the goal of improving outcomes and reducing recidivism.

The Trial Court currently conducts 54 specialty court sessions across the state: 35 drug courts; eight mental health courts; six veterans treatment courts; two homeless courts; a family drug court; and a family resolutions specialty court.

Boston Municipal Court / Boston Medical Center BOAT Project
The Trial Court will partner with Boston Medical Center on a $4 million grant over four years to implement the BOAT Project in the Boston Municipal Court. The BOAT Project will serve persons with serious mental illness who are criminally involved and need more comprehensive, intensive services than are currently available.

BOAT patients will be assessed and treated by a multidisciplinary care team and referred to fully integrated primary care practices within Boston Medical Center or one of the hospital’s 14 affiliated community health centers. After 90 days of intensive outpatient services, patients will transition to a “stepdown” outpatient program, and then to an integrated primary care practice. Monitoring, case management and support services will continue for an average of 12-18 months.

The BOAT Program will serve 75 patients in the first year and 100 patients each subsequent year for a total of 375 patients over four years. Boston Municipal Court First Justice Kathleen Coffey will serve as the Project Director.

MISSION Springfield Grant
The Massachusetts Trial Court will collaborate with the University of Massachusetts, the Behavioral Health Network (BHN), and state substance use and mental health authorities to implement an evidence-based co-

occurring disorders wrap-around treatment model called Maintaining Independence and Sobriety through Systems Integration, Outreach, and Networking-Criminal Justice (MISSION-CJ). The model will be implemented at the Springfield Drug Court using a $2 million grant over the course of five years.

The MISSION model, currently implemented in four other specialty courts, systematically integrates case management, co-occurring disorders treatment, peer support, vocational supports, and trauma-informed care into a single, coordinated service delivery approach. The model was previously developed by UMass Medical School with SAMHSA funding to improve coordination between the court, drug court participants, and community-based treatment providers. The goals of the grant include to reduce criminal recidivism, improve mental health, and reduce substance use disorders.

Over five years, the project will serve a total of 200 Springfield Drug Court participants who have co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. Drug court participants will receive one year of services delivered by a case manager and peer team, who will also link program participants to other community-based services, including medical benefits and medication-assisted treatments. Specialty Courts Administrator Sheila Casey will serve as the Project Director.

The University of Massachusetts Medical School, developer of the MISSION model, will provide staff training, project coordination, and perform evaluations. Behavioral Health Network (BHN), an experienced provider, will deliver these new MISSION services within the court.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. The MISSION model has been cited in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities. To learn more about SAMHSA, please visit **www.samhsa.gov** (http://www.samhsa.gov).

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