



Office of the Trial Court

Veterans Treatment Courts – Specialty Courts

- Veterans Treatment Courts began in 2008 in Buffalo, New York
- There are now over 200 Veterans dockets across the country
- Massachusetts began Dedham Veterans Treatment Court March of 2012
 - Presided over by Judge Mary Hogan Sullivan
- BMC Central opened in January of 2014
 - Presided over by Judge Eleanor Sinnott
- VALOR act diversion began in 2012, under M.G.L. 276A sec. 10



Office of the Trial Court

VALOR Act Diversion

Qualifications

- Individual has history of military service
- Any offense carrying potential imprisonment
- No prior adult convictions in/out of state
- No open warrants, cases or appeals

Procedure

- Court may continue on arraignment date for 14 days
- Contact local VJO or Peer Specialist from DVS for assessment within the 14 days
- Return with assessment and court may grant 90 days for treatment
- Return with treatment report and court may dismiss, or grant further continuance for treatment



Office of the Trial Court

Dedham Veterans Treatment Court

Qualifications

- Individual has history of military service
- Most offenses, but speak with prosecutor
- Must be in Norfolk County

Procedure

- Send in application, ask probation for a Veterans Court Application in District Ct
- Defendant will meet with VJO for assessment if eligible, or court clinician if not; and must observe a court session
- If the team determines that treatment is appropriate they will send acceptance
- Individual must admit/ plea to a term of 18 months probation with the condition “enter and complete veterans court”
- Sessions are Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m.



Office of the Trial Court BMC Veterans Treatment Court

Qualifications

- Individual has history of military service
- Must be a nexus between their military service and alleged crime
- Must be in a BMC Court

Procedure

- Send in application, as the prosecutor for a Veterans Court Application
- Defendant will meet with VJO for assessment if eligible, or court clinician if not; and must observe a court session
- If a nexus is determined the team will discuss, if the individual is invited defense counsel will be notified, and case can transfer to Veterans Court Session, BMC Central, Fridays at 9 a.m.
- Program lasts 12-24 months based on individuals performance
- After successful completion the prosecutor will use the accomplishment as an aid in sentencing



Office of the Trial Court

Future of Veterans Treatment Courts

- Holyoke District Court
 - Planning to open this year, presided by Judge Laurie MacLeod
- Holyoke will service Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties
- Framingham District Court
 - Planning to open this year, presided by Judge Michael Fabbri
- With these four courts, over 35% of Veterans arrested in the Commonwealth will have treatment courts available
- With proper implementation of the VALOR Act diversion 100% of veterans who qualify can receive treatment



Department of Veterans' Services(DVS)

SAVE Team Veterans Court & Jail Diversion Program

The SAVE Team provides peer support and case management services across the Commonwealth for veterans involved in the justice system and those involved in the DMH MISSION program. These services are conducted using Justice & Diversion Peer Specialists (JDPS) funded by ISA's with DMH and the Trial Court.

SAVE currently has 7 personnel assigned as JDPS throughout the Commonwealth.

Don Purington-JDPS Team Leader, Suffolk County Veterans Court

Dave Odenweller-Norfolk County Veterans Court

Carolyn Jette-Worcester County

Miguel Pauwels-Essex County

Lynda Bik-Essex County

David Felty-Hampden County

Brad Tofias-Serves as a substance abuse
counseling specialist for veterans in the justice system



Veterans Treatment Court v. Jail Diversion

Veterans Treatment Court

Norfolk & Suffolk County

- In the VTCs the JDPS provide peer support to veterans, resource referral and system navigation to the veterans and their counsel and court personnel.
- The JDPS also provides oversight and guidance to the mentors participating in the VTC model.
- SAVE will also use other personnel to provide support services to the family of the veteran if necessary.

Jail Diversion

- For jail diversion services, the SAVE Team provides a central intake system for any veteran identified in the court system. Referrals can be self referrals, from the courts or from legal counsel.
- The JDPS will interview/assess the veteran and provide peer support, resource referral and system navigation.



ACTIVE CASELOAD

- Currently the JDPS have 101 active cases. Those cases encompass Veterans Treatment Courts, jail diversion and re-entry cases.
- Only two counties (Norfolk & Suffolk) have a formal Veterans Treatment Court program at this time.
- Other counties that are not yet covered by a Veterans Treatment Court there are still being served by the JDPS through the DMH MISSION program or other jail diversion programs unique to the individual court.
- The JDPS are also working with the VA to identify veterans in custody in order to provide pre-release services. Those veterans not eligible for VA Justice Outreach services are being served by the JDPS.



ACTIVE CASELOAD CONT.

COUNTY	TOTAL	VTC	JD	RE-ENTRY
BARNSTABLE	6		6	
BERKSHIRE	0			
BRISTOL	0			
ESSEX	10		10	
FRANKLIN	3		3	
HAMPDEN	2		2	
HAMPSHIRE	0			
MIDDLESEX	6		6	
NORFOLK	15	15		
PLYMOUTH	5		5	
SUFFOLK	18	18		
WORCESTER	36		24	12
TOTALS	101	33	56	12



CONTACT INFO & QUESTIONS

Referrals to the SAVE Team:

DVS-SAVE Team

600 Washington Street, Boston

617-210-5743

Or faxed to Chelsea SAVE office at 617-887-7004

QUESTIONS?



Veterans Justice Outreach Program

A justice-involved Veteran is:

- A Veteran in contact with local law enforcement who can be appropriately diverted from arrest into mental health or substance abuse treatment;
- A Veteran in a local jail, either pre-trial or serving a sentence
- A Veteran involved in adjudication or monitoring by a court



VJO Initiative

- Eligibility Criteria
- Identify & enroll target group
- Screening & Assessment
- Service Plan
- Negotiate terms & conditions
- Linkage to community / VA resources
- Monitor service delivery / participation
- Improved outcomes/increased public safety



Roles of VJO

- **Valor Act**
 - Conduct assessment
 - Write up evaluation for court
 - Establish treatment plan and make subsequent referrals
 - Confirm treatment compliance
- **Veterans Treatment Court**
 - Confirm eligibility
 - Conduct assessments for VA eligible participants and devise treatment plan
 - Work collaboratively with the treatment team regarding treatment compliance and treatment plans for participants



Roles of VJO cont'd

- And the gray matter...
 - Devise treatment plans for veterans who don't meet criteria for Valor Act nor meet treatment need for VTCs
 - Work with judicial system to establish alternative disposition for VA eligible veterans
- Education
 - Train police, court personnel and community providers about PTSD, TBI, and other mental health issues relevant to the veteran population
 - Provide information to court personnel regarding veteran related dispositions (ie. Valor Act and VTCs)



VJO Personnel

- Staffing
 - 7 VJO positions for The Commonwealth
 - Each have dedicated catchment area to provide coverage for the State