

Veterans Court

2nd Judicial District Court

Reno, Nevada

Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans,
and Adults with Special Needs

May, 2012

EXHIBIT C Meeting Date: 5-15-12
Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults With
Special Needs (NRS 218E.750)
Document consists of 17 pages.
Entire Exhibit provided.



Veterans Court in NV

- ❑ Statute approved by 2009 Legislature for multi-jurisdictional Veterans Court
- ❑ Program targets treatment of justice-involved veterans
- ❑ First Veterans Court docket held on October 14, 2009
- ❑ Veterans Court is held every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. in Specialty Courts



Eligibility Criteria

- A veteran or a member of the military who appears to suffer from mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse or post-traumatic stress disorder
- Problem appears to be related to military service or readjustment to civilian life
- Veteran who would benefit from assignment to an appropriate treatment program



Eligibility Process

- During initial months, defendants were transferred from existing Specialty Courts dockets
- Defendants are now accepted without being enrolled in another Specialty Court provided an appropriate treatment program can be designed for them through the VA or Vet Center
- Referral form available at washoecourts.us



Veterans Court Team

- Senior Judges Breen and Blake
- Public Defender's Office
- V.A. Hospital
- NV Office of Veteran Services
- Vet Center
- State Parole and Probation
- Specialty Courts Staff



Participant Trend

(# active at beginning of year)

- July 1, 2009 0
- July 1, 2010 19
- July 1, 2011 36

- May 1, 2012 38

- Total served since October, 2009: 99 (undup.)



Veterans Court Demographics

- Male: 91%
- Female: 9%

- Average age: 45.5
 - Youngest: age 20
 - Oldest: age 78



Veterans Court Demographics

- White: 80%
- Black: 12%
- Hispanic: 7%
- Asian: 1%



Referral Sources to Veterans Court

- Defense Attorney: 39%
- Specialty Courts: 33%
- Lower Court Judge: 8%
- District Court Judge: 7%
- Jail/Pre-Trial Services: 5%
- Family or self-referral: 5%
- Veterans Administration: 2%
- Parole and Probation: 1%



Crimes Committed by Participants

- ❑ Drug and Alcohol Crimes: 31%
- ❑ Crimes Against a Person: 24%
- ❑ Property Crimes: 24%
- ❑ Nuisance Crimes: 21%

- ❑ Misdemeanors: 25%
- ❑ Gross Misdemeanors: 6%
- ❑ Felonies: 69%



Case Resolutions (since inception)

- Graduates: 34
- Involuntary Removals: 7
- Voluntary Removals: 4
- Transfers (all to Adult Drug Court): 4
- Deceased: 1



Mental Health Issues of Veterans

- Most common Mental Health conditions:
 - PTSD
 - Depression
 - Bipolar
 - Mood Disorder
 - Anxiety
 - Schizoaffective Disorder
 - Dementia



Substance Abuse Concerns

- Most common substance abuse issues:
 - Poly-substance abuse
 - Alcohol
 - Marijuana
 - Methamphetamines
 - Heroin/Opiates
 - Cocaine



Case Study

- ❑ Charge: child neglect (pled from child abuse)
- ❑ Military service: 30 years – 3 combat deployments.
Age: 50
- ❑ Circumstances: pool cue horseplay caused flashback
- ❑ Treatment: PTSD (individual & group)
- ❑ Court supervision at 3 months: checks in twice weekly, court every 2 weeks, regular random drug testing



Case Study

- ❑ Charge: DUI. Age: 60
- ❑ Military Service: Army, combat
- ❑ Circumstances: His wife of 38 years died and he began drinking heavily and wanted to end his life by “suicide by cop”.
- ❑ Treatment: Individual for depression/mood disorder/bereavement, Vet Center for groups, substance abuse program at VA, 12 steps.
- ❑ Court compliance at 3 months, with one drinking relapse: daily check-ins with PBTs including weekends, weekly court. Still in denial.



Case study

- ❑ Charge: Possession of Controlled Substance (hallucinogen – first time use)
- ❑ Military Service: Coast Guard. Age: 20
- ❑ Circumstances: Became an alcoholic in the military; had very difficult family life; sustained leg injury in the service.
- ❑ Treatment: 12 steps, work, close monitoring for addiction counseling, enrollment in nursing school.
- ❑ Court compliance: check ins 3 times/week, PBTs and random drug testing/Etgs, weekly court



Observations: Veterans Court compared to other Specialty Courts

- ❑ Overwhelmingly male but wide variety of ages
- ❑ Charges tend to be more violent
- ❑ Participants are more compliant
- ❑ Participants have more complex medical needs
- ❑ Participants get more services: housing, medical, mental health, substance abuse, assistance with accessing Veterans benefits
- ❑ Higher rates of completion