



**Office of Communications and Community Collaboration**  
640 Temple 8<sup>th</sup> Floor / Detroit, Michigan 48201 / (313) 833-3984

**NEWS RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**  
**Teresa Blossom, C&CC Director**  
**(313) 833-2983 office/ 213-0838 cell**

For Immediate Release:  
Thursday, January 8, 2009

**Wayne County to receive \$282,496 in grants to pilot mental health court;**  
*Collaboration between Third Circuit Court and Mental Health Agency expected to address criminal system's revolving door for those with mental illness*

**Wayne County, Michigan** – Wayne County has been awarded a total of \$282,496 through two state grants to establish a mental health court in a joint pilot between the Third Circuit Court and the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency (D-WCCMH Agency), officials announced Thursday.

The Wayne County Third Circuit Court was awarded a \$132,496 grant from the Michigan Supreme Court's State Court Administrative Office while the D-WCCMH Agency was awarded \$150,000 from the Michigan Department of Community Health.

In a joint statement Judge Timothy Kenny and D-WCCMH Agency Acting Executive Director Veda A. Sharp, LMSW said: "Across the United States, county jails have become warehouses for persons with mental illness who are non-violent and need treatment rather than incarceration. The collaboration between the Third Circuit Court and the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency to establish a mental health court will allow us to work together and effectively address the revolving door into the criminal justice system for those with mental illness."

The mental health court is expected to increase screenings of defendants for mental illness, provide a sentencing option for judges, and reduce recidivism by increasing the placement of non-violent, mentally ill defendants into mental health treatment as quickly as

possible and with judicial supervision to ensure compliance with a continuum of care and treatment. Almost all of the cases considered for the mental health court will be controlled substance offenses or crimes against property. The pilot is expected to start in early 2009.

Wayne County Executive Robert A. Ficano, Chief Judge William J. Giovan, Prosecutor Kym Worthy, Sheriff Warren Evans, Michigan Department of Corrections Metro Regional Administrator Dinah Y. Moore, and Chief Defender Donald L. Johnson of the State Defender Office-Legal Aid and Defender Association were among the stakeholders who made it possible for the mental health and justice systems to collaborate in developing the mental health court pilot. – end –