

The TASC Connection

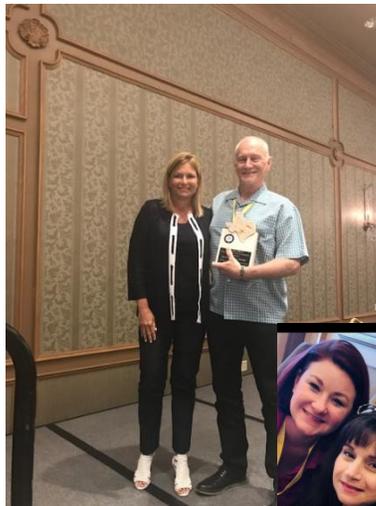


INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Flag Winners	2
El Paso County Article	2
Special Recognition	3
Legislative Update	4
New TASC Board Members	5
New Resource Center	5
Dallas Young Adult Court	5

TASC 2019 Conference - Highlights

Thank you to everyone who attended the conference this year! We hope you all learned a lot, established some new relationships, and enjoyed the beach! We are already looking forward to the 2020 Conference in Dallas!



TASC 2019 Conference – Flag Winners

1st Place: *Montgomery County Veteran's Court.* ONE designated team member receives travel, hotel and registration for the 2020 conference



2nd Place: *Montgomery County Juvenile Drug Court.* ONE designated team member receives hotel and registration for the 2020 conference

3rd Place: *Midland County Drug Court.* ONE designated team member receives registration for the 2020 conference



Article from El Paso County Officers

Check out the TASC website for a great article written by several law enforcement officers of El Paso County. The article includes information about details of an arrest for Driving While Intoxicated.

Special Recognition

National Drug Court Month

National Drug Court Month is our chance to celebrate the lifesaving work you do, engage our stakeholders and inspire our communities. And this year is extra special as the 30th anniversary of treatment courts.

Check out NADCP's new National Drug Court Month Toolkit! It's designed to help make your voices heard, using proven strategies for reaching the right audience in the best ways. From step-by-step instructions on how to engage your elected officials, to sample resources to get your court in the media spotlight, to strategies for using social media to your advantage, this toolkit has it all!

Mission:

The Texas Association of Specialty Courts (TASC) builds and strengthens Texas specialty courts through collaboration, advocacy and education.

Kaufman County Drug Court Month Celebration

Kaufman County Graduation celebrated National Drug Court Month by receiving a proclamation declaring May as National Drug Court Month. Kaufman County Judge, Hal Richards, and Congressman Lance Gooden attended and made presentations and comments honoring the success of treatment courts. District Directors of Representative Keith Bell and Senator Bob Hall were also present and made presentations and comments.



Bexar County Family Drug Court

Under Judge Peter Sakai's leadership, the Bexar County Family Drug Court has reunited over 250 families impacting the lives of over 700 children and is celebrating their 25th Anniversary!

Dallas County 4C Celebrates 10 Years!

During their April graduation, The Dallas County 4-C Court celebrated 10 years of serving the citizens of Dallas County. 4-C is a reentry court that helps probationers that were sent to SAFFP continue and grow in their recovery as they transition back into the community. 4-C provides participants one central location for court, outpatient treatment, probation reporting, and random drug testing. Over the past ten years, 4-C has helped approximately 2,100 participants become better members of the community through treatment and accountability.

Judge Robert Francis started the 4-C Court 10 years ago, and in April they added 19 new successful graduates. Joining the celebration from Dallas County Government was County Commissioner J.J. Koch, and County Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia's assistant, Noemi Gonzalez. Judge Francis received a proclamation from the county recognizing 4-C's 10 years of "keeping our communities safe and allowing past offenders a second chance to be productive citizens in our society." Also joining the celebration were State District Judge Jennifer Bennett, Dallas Community Supervision Director Javed Syed, many former staff members, as well as representatives from the Dallas County District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and CSCD.



TASC Legislative Update

At the TASC Annual Business meeting in Galveston, a Legislative Committee report was presented on four bills that, if passed, would impact future funding for specialty courts. As an update to the conference presentation, the current status of each bill's amended language, as well as stage of progress in the current session is as follows:

- HB 1243 allocates 1% of revenue collected from Mixed Beverage Taxes for deposit in a Specialty Court Fund to be awarded through the Governor's CJD grants. If passed, \$10 million of sustainable funding is estimated to be available each year, designated solely for specialty courts. Currently, only \$2.1 million annually is designated exclusively for specialty courts.

HB 1243 passed in the House on May 2nd by a 137-3 vote and awaits a Senate sponsor and assignment to a Senate Committee for reporting to the Senate floor.

- SB 346 is a comprehensive court cost reform bill in response to Appellate decisions that current criminal costs are unconstitutional unless all funds collected are being used solely for legitimate criminal justice purposes. Under SB 346, state criminal cost and local criminal costs are increased for both felony and misdemeanor cases. A specific portion of state criminal costs, (.96%), is designated solely for a Specialty Court Fund for distribution by the Governor's CJD grants. Also, a percentage of local criminal costs may be retained by Counties with specialty courts: 23.8095% of \$105 felony costs and 16.2602% of \$123 misdemeanor costs. SB 346, however, repeals the current \$60 cost assessed on alcohol and drug convictions. The only Fiscal Note estimating revenue pertains to the .96% of state criminal costs, at no greater than \$100,000. The Legislative Budget Board says the impact for local government cannot be determined.

SB 346 passed in the Senate on April 17th by a 30-1 vote and after assignment to the House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee, was favorably reported on May 2nd for a House floor vote on a date not yet calendared.

- SB 1180 as initially filed would impose \$2 cost on all felony and misdemeanor criminal cases solely for funding Veteran Treatment Courts. 60% would be retained locally and 40% remitted to the State, solely for Veteran Treatment Courts. The initial filing was adversely reported by the Committee on Veteran Affairs & Border Security with a Substitute Bill filed that merely mandates annual reporting of: 1) Number of Defendants participating in Veterans Treatment Courts; 2) Completion data; and 3) Amount of Grant funding received by each program.

SB 1180 (as Substituted) passed in the Senate on May 1st by a 31-0 vote and awaits a House sponsor and assignment to a House Committee for reporting to the Senate floor.

- HB 4244 amends an existing statute, Article 42A.304, CCP, authorizing Judges to permit offenders to make a donation to "a charitable organization engaged primarily in performing charitable functions in the community in which the defendant resides for defendants under community supervision or for veterans".

HB 4244 was favorably reported out of the House Corrections Committee on May 1st and awaits assignment to the House Committee on Calendars for floor vote in the House.

Conclusion: It appears that the only Bill that with certainty will provide both increased and sustainable funding for specialty courts is HB 1243. Although SB 346 does provide a new revenue source for local retention (23% for felonies and 16% for misdemeanors) of local court costs, the amount will vary depending on the County as well as the number of specialty courts in each County. Also, the revenue stream from SB 346 will be delayed because the new costs apply only to offense dates after January 1, 2020.



New 2019 TASC President & Board Members

Welcome Judge Michael Chitty as the new TASC President for 2019. TASC also welcomes new board of directors for Bexar County, Region 3, and Region 4. Welcome Judge Ernie Glenn from Bexar County, Judge Jeff Addison for Bowie and Red River Counties, and Judge John Board from Potter County.

Newly Launched Resource Center

The Specialty Courts Resource Center is excited to release our newly developed website which will be used to help assist specialty courts by providing technical assistance and training (TTA) and resources. Notifications will be sent out as the website continues to develop and more options become available.

Check it out at <http://txspecialtycourts.org/>

Dallas Young Adult Court Service Project

Dallas County AIM Court for young justice-involved adults coordinated their annual Court Service Project at Bonton Farms. The Court team and participants, including presiding AIM Court Judge Brandon Birmingham, rolled up their sleeves and got dirty on the farm pulling weeds, feeding the goats and chickens, and building a fence for the garden at Bonton Farms located in South Dallas.



Texas Association of Specialty Courts
Attention: Amber Gregory
George J. Beto Criminal Justice Center
Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, Texas 77341-2296

Email: agregory@shsu.edu
Phone: (936)294-3916

We're on the Web!
<http://www.tasctx.org>
Check us out on Facebook!