

How to Enter Mental Health Court

1. Referral

The agency, attorney, or defendant will submit the MHC referral form and signed release of information to Cindy Boersma, MHC Coordinator via e-mail at cynthia.m.boersma@ojd.state.or.us or by dropping off or mailing these items to Cindy at the MHC office on the 2nd floor of the Justice Building located at 100 South Oakdale Avenue in Medford, Oregon.

Referral forms and release of information forms are available on the Jackson County Circuit Court website, from the MHC Coordinator, and at the MHC office.

2. Review

The MHC Coordinator screens the applicant for initial eligibility. Eligibility criteria are available on the Jackson County Circuit Court website, from the MHC Coordinator, and at the MHC office.

This will include checking to make sure the applicant has no automatic disqualifiers (Measure 11 charge without escape valve offer, sex offense charge, on supervision for sex offense, etc.) and has criminal charges pending in Jackson County Circuit Court. Also, this will include verifying the existence of current diagnosis of a serious and persistent mental illness.

If the applicant meets initial eligibility criteria, then the MHC Coordinator will contact him/her and direct him/her to attend one session of MHC (every Tuesday at 1:30 pm in courtroom 102 of the Juvenile Services Building located at 609 West 10th Street in Medford, Oregon). If the applicant is lodged in the jail, the requirement to attend one session of MHC is waived. The MHC Coordinator will also schedule an informational meeting with the applicant at the MHC Coordinator's Office or in the jail if the applicant is lodged.

If the MHC Coordinator believes that the applicant is a good candidate for MHC following the informational meeting, the MHC Coordinator will set up an open referral staffing with the MHC Team and will also invite appropriate parties to attend. These parties could include, but are not limited to, the defense attorney, prosecuting attorney, mental health case manager and/or therapist, probation/parole officer, substance abuse counselor, etc. Open referral staffings will be held every Monday from 4-5 pm in the Laurel Room, which is located in the Pinecone Area on the 2nd floor of the Jackson County Health and Human Services Building at 140 South Holly Street in Medford, Oregon. Parties will be asked to bring supporting documents to the staffing. These could include, but are not limited to, police reports, mental health counseling/treatment

reports, substance abuse counseling/treatment reports, psychological and/or psychiatric evaluations, etc.

3. Acceptance

If the applicant is approved for MHC, the applicant or the attorney for the applicant must prepare the required MHC paperwork. This includes the MHC Contract; the Waiver of Rule Against Ex Parte Communication and Consent for Disclosure of Confidential Information; the MHC plea petition; and the MHC petition, waiver, and agreement. These documents are available on the Jackson County Circuit Court website, from the MHC Coordinator, and at the MHC office.

A court date will be scheduled for the applicant. The applicant's defense attorney and the prosecuting attorney will also be notified of this date. MHC pleas will be every Tuesday at 1:15 pm in courtroom 102.

4. Participation

Once the applicant has submitted all of the required court documents and pled guilty or no contest to his/her pending criminal charge(s), the applicant will be considered a participant of MHC. The participant will then be directed to attend MHC the following Tuesday at 1:30 pm in courtroom 102. The participant may also be directed to report to Community Justice (parole and probation office) located at 1101 W. Main Street, Suite 101, in Medford, Oregon and/or to Jackson County Mental Health at 140 South Holly Street in Medford, Oregon.

The participant will appear in court as directed by the MHC Judge. Each week the participant is scheduled to be in court, there will be a staffing at 3 pm on the Monday immediately preceding Tuesday's court session in the Laurel Room to discuss the participant's progress, any concerns about the participant, etc. The MHC Team will attend these staffings. The participant will not be present.

The MHC Team consists of: Jackson County Circuit Court Judge Lisa Greif, Jackson County District Attorney Beth Heckert, Sara Collins of Southern Oregon Public Defender, Inc., MHC Coordinator Cindy Boersma, Lieutenant Curtis Whipple of the Medford Police Department, Jackson County Community Justice Director Shane Hagey, Jackson County Community Justice Deputy Director John Watson, Jackson County Community Justice Research/Policy Analyst Jodi Merrit, Jackson County Mental Health Division Manager Stacy Brubaker, and Jackson County Mental Health Community Outreach Manager Doug Huston. It is likely that the ongoing staffings for current MHC participants will also include parole/probation officers, case managers/therapists from JCMH or other community mental health providers, and substance abuse counselors.

5. Termination

The decision to terminate a participant from MHC rests solely with the MHC judge. A MHC participant will not be allowed to withdraw from MHC once he/she has entered the program. If the participant is terminated from MHC, a sentencing date will be scheduled with Judge Greif via her judicial assistant, Debbie Scales. Jackson County Community Justice will be responsible for filing the show cause motion and order with the Court. The original defense and prosecuting attorneys will be notified of the court date and will be allowed to address the Court regarding the participant.

Alternatives

If the applicant is not approved for MHC, the MHC Team may refer him/her to other alternatives. These could include a multidisciplinary team staffing (MDT), the jail diversion program, and/or the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team.

More Information

For further information regarding MHC, please contact Cindy Boersma at cynthia.m.boersma@ojd.state.or.us or 541-776-7171 ext. 215. Her office is located on the 2nd floor of the Justice Building near the existing treatment court offices.

For information regarding court dates/times, please contact Debbie Scales, judicial assistant for Judge Greif, at debbie.scales@ojd.state.or.us or 541-776-7171 ext. 108.