



MEDIA ADVISORY: 10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE DARTMOUTH WELLNESS COURT

Friday, Nov. 1, 2019 (Halifax, NS) – Media are invited to the 10th anniversary of the Nova Scotia Mental Health Court Program, now known as the Dartmouth Wellness Court. The event will include the release of the most recent program evaluation and report on the future of Wellness Court Programs in Nova Scotia.

When: 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2019

Where: Courtroom 5, Provincial Court, 277 Pleasant St., Dartmouth

Speakers at the event will include:

- Tomi Abriel, Graduate of the Mental Health Court Program
- The Hon. Pamela Williams, Chief Judge of the Provincial and Family Courts
- The Hon. Mark Furey, Attorney General of Nova Scotia and Minister of Justice
- Dr. Crystal Dieleman, School of Occupational Therapy at Dalhousie Faculty of Health

Background

Wellness Court Programs are specialty courts where a team of professionals helps address the issues that directly contributed to the individual coming into conflict with the law.

Collaboration and creative problem-solving are central to these programs. Unlike the traditional adversarial approach of the regular criminal courts, Wellness Court Programs develop and administer a support plan that is unique to the needs of each individual participant. The court team monitors the individual's progress while still holding them accountable for their crime and continually assessing their potential risk to public safety. The team can also help participants connect or re-connect to support services in the community, rebuild key relationships, and improve their well-being and living situations, so they are less likely to reoffend.

In honour of the 10th anniversary, and in keeping with the program's commitment to evaluate and improve the services available, the court team, led by Chief Judge Williams, collaborated with the Dalhousie Faculty of Health's School of Occupational Therapy to do an independent evaluation and report on progress and next steps for the program.

The evaluation will also report on the success of the related programs in Dartmouth, including the Opioid Court Program, the Alcohol Court Program and the Judicial Monitoring Program, as well as the Wellness Court Programs in Amherst, Port Hawkesbury and Kentville.

More information on the Dartmouth Wellness Court is available on the Courts' website at https://www.courts.ns.ca/Provincial_Court/NSPC_mental_health_program.htm.

-30-

Media Contacts:

Jennifer Stairs
Director of Communications
Nova Scotia Judiciary
902-221-5257 (C)
stairsjl@courts.ns.ca

Maureen Wheller
Senior Communications Advisor
Mental Health & Addictions Program, Nova Scotia Health Authority
902-221-7008 (C)
Maureen.Wheller@nshealth.ca

Sarah Levy MacLeod
Media Relations Advisor
Nova Scotia Department of Justice
902-478-3229 (C)
Sarah.Levy@novascotia.ca

Terry Murray-Arnold
School Communications Specialist
Dalhousie Faculty of Health
902-495-0015 (C)
tmurray@dal.ca