



**Superior Court of California
County of Orange**

NEWS RELEASE

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**Orange County Drug Courts Get
High Marks in Evaluation**

Santa Ana, Ca. - The Orange County Superior Court Drug Court Program continues to demonstrate success in breaking the cycle of drug abuse and associated criminal behavior, according to a recent update of a 1999 evaluation study conducted by the California State University at Long Beach Department of Criminal Justice. The lead evaluator, Elizabeth P. Deschenes, Ph.D. said, "the program is well designed and has achieved completion and retention rates equivalent to or above other Drug Court programs across the nation."

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Drug Court Programs, the evaluation report examined the Drug Court's program retention and completion rates of 621 participants from 1997 through 1999. It also measured recidivism rates for those who had participated in the drug court program compared to probationers who had not. Findings revealed that recidivism doubled for high-risk probationers who did not participate in the drug court program. (38 percent versus 19 percent).

In addition to gathering intake and criminal record data on the sample populations, the study included observations of drug court hearings, group counseling sessions and surveys of drug court staff members and program participants. Survey results indicated participants believed the strength of the drug court program that helped them to remain free of alcohol, drugs, and crime was the stringent, regimented program of mandatory urine testing, 12-step meetings and drug treatment as well as supervision by judicial and probation officers.

Drug Court is a multi-agency collaborative effort which brings the justice and treatment communities together in a unique partnership. Participating agencies in Orange County include the Superior Court, District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Department, Health Care Agency's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, Sheriff's Department, local police departments and the Community Services Program, (CSP), Inc.

For a copy of the "Success of Drug Court in Orange County, California: Process and Outcome Evaluations," or for additional information, contact Ralph Rodgers at (714) 834-5875.

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