



# Media Advisory

Alaska Court System, 825 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Anchorage 99501

Contact: Michelle Bartley, Therapeutic Courts Program Coordinator, 907-264-8250;

[mbartley@akcourts.us](mailto:mbartley@akcourts.us)

Contact: Mara Rabinowitz, Communications Counsel, 907-264-0879;

[mrabinowitz@akcourts.us](mailto:mrabinowitz@akcourts.us)

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## Alaska's Therapeutic Courts Recognize National Recovery Month – September 2018 –

**Anchorage, Alaska, September 5, 2018** - Throughout the month of September, Alaska's therapeutic courts are participating in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Recovery Month <https://www.recoverymonth.gov/>. During Recovery Month, SAMHSA, and Alaska's therapeutic courts, work to increase public awareness and understanding of mental health and substance use disorders, and to celebrate recovery.

To kick off Recovery Month, an Anchorage therapeutic court judge, an alumnus of therapeutic court, and a Project Coordinator will participate in the *Justice Alaska* radio program on September 17 on APRN's *Hometown, Alaska*.

As another way of raising awareness, Alaska's therapeutic courts invite the media and members of the public to observe these courts in action to learn more about how the courts operate and to hear how this collaborative process promotes participants' recovery journeys. To observe a court session, contact the Project Coordinator and complete the attached media release form.

Therapeutic courts are an alternative justice model. Eligible individuals may choose to participate in a therapeutic court in lieu of incarceration. Participants must attend treatment and recovery support groups, meet regularly with a probation officer, and appear for frequent in-court status hearings. A collaborative court team made up of a supervising judge, district attorney, defense attorney, probation officer, and/or substance abuse or mental health treatment provider oversees and closely monitors participants. A therapeutic court team meets weekly to review participants' progress and encourages participants' success during court hearings.

Alaska has fourteen therapeutic courts statewide. Eight of these courts accept cases in which there is a clear nexus between the crimes committed and addiction, three work primarily with defendants with mental health issues, two work with families involved with Child in Need of Aid cases, and the Anchorage Veterans Court accepts participants that require behavioral health services. Attached is a summary of Alaska's therapeutic courts, including the location of the court, the type of court, the judges presiding over the court, the target population, and the Project Coordinators for the court. More information can be found on the court system's website: <http://courts.alaska.gov/therapeutic/index.htm>.