



Media Advisory

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Alaska's Therapeutic Courts Recognize National Impaired Driving Prevention Month
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Anchorage, Alaska, December 20, 2018 – December is National Impaired Driving Prevention Month, an important time to raise awareness about the dangers of impaired driving and the programs that help reduce impaired driving in our neighborhoods.

“The holiday season is a dangerous time on our nation’s roadways due to an increase in impaired driving,” says Jim Eberspacher, Director of National Center for DWI Courts. *“Impaired Driving Prevention Month is a call to action for communities to provide solutions to potentially deadly hazards on our roadways, and DWI courts are one of those solutions, addressing the root problem of addiction by providing repeat DWI drivers with treatment and accountability. DWI courts help to keep our roads and communities safer while ensuring program participants learn to make safer, healthier choices for everyone.”*

Alaska’s DWI Courts (referred to as wellness or therapeutic courts) were initially established 19 years ago to combat impaired driving on Alaska’s roads. Since that time, more than 1,500 people have graduated from one of Alaska’s therapeutic courts. Over the past 8 years, 93% of those graduating from addiction courts in Alaska have not committed another DUI.

Officer Doug Welborn of the Fairbanks Police Department stated: *“As a member of the Fairbanks Wellness Court team I’ve been impressed with the level of dedication participants show in the program. It’s rewarding to see the transformation toward healthier lifestyles while embracing treatment and rebuilding relationships impacted by alcohol or substance abuse. It’s also uplifting to see alumni members, who have regained their driving privileges, mentor and assist participants in a wide range of areas, including safe transportation.”*

“Right out of the gate Wellness Court taught me about accountability and responsibility. The Court was a catalyst for change and now serves as a guideline for positive personal growth.” (Fairbanks Wellness Court graduate)

Alaska has DUI/drug courts in Anchorage, Bethel, Fairbanks, Kenai, Juneau and Palmer. For more information about therapeutic courts in Alaska:

<http://courts.alaska.gov/therapeutic/index.htm>.

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. For media coverage of a court session, contact the local Project Coordinator and complete the attached media release form.