



News for Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Courts Host Second Regional Summit to Address Growing Behavioral Health Crisis

HARRISBURG — Focused on combatting the growing behavioral health crisis sweeping Pennsylvania and the nation, the Pennsylvania Courts together with Supreme Court Justice Kevin M. Dougherty and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, today held its second summit in Union County.

Spearheaded by Justice Dougherty, these events are part of the Court’s Behavioral Health in the Courts initiative and are designed to strengthen partnerships between the judiciary, system partners, behavioral health providers and community stakeholders to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health challenges who come into contact with the justice system.

“Mental and behavioral health challenges have become a defining issue across Pennsylvania, reaching into our homes, schools, workplaces and courtrooms,” said Justice Dougherty. “Across the Commonwealth, judges are seeing more cases where mental health is at the heart of the matter – whether in criminal proceedings, family disputes or child welfare concerns. The need for stronger, more accessible behavioral health resources could not be clearer.

“While the courts alone cannot solve this crisis, we are committed to being a vital part of the solution. These regional summits allow us to unite with partners across systems to share insights, strengthen understanding, and build responses that are not only more coordinated, but also more compassionate and effective for the people we serve.”

Today’s summit in Union County is the second of seven planned statewide meetings, bringing together judges, court staff, behavioral health professionals, county and state officials, law enforcement and others working at the intersection of justice and behavioral health.

The goal is to share best practices, address challenges, and continue building a coordinated approach that prioritizes treatment and support over cyclical court involvement and incarceration.

Sessions during the summit will include discussions on key issues with partners to address mental and behavioral health challenges in Pennsylvania including representatives from law enforcement and the behavioral health communities.

“We’re grateful for the expertise and collaboration that these regional summits bring as they help us identify and close the gaps that exist across systems,” said Court Administrator of Pennsylvania Andrea Tuominen. “The courts play a critical role, but real progress depends on partnership.

These relationships are the foundation of our success because no single institution can tackle these complex challenges on its own.”

“By bringing together experts and leaders from every field, we’re building the connections and shared understanding needed to close these system gaps, expand access to care, and create lasting change for the people of Pennsylvania.”

The Behavioral Health in the Courts initiative supports court-led strategies to better connect individuals with services and reduce the cycle of crisis, arrest and recidivism. The regional summits will focus on practical strategies for collaboration, diversion programs, crisis response, and access to person-centered care.

More information about the summits and the Behavioral Health in the Court initiative is available through the Pennsylvania Courts website and social media ([Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#))

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