

## Effectiveness of a short-term mental health court: Criminal recidivism one year postexit

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This article investigated criminal recidivism 1 year postexit from a mental health court (MHC), which has, unlike prior MHCs studied, relatively short periods of court supervision. It benefits from a federal pretrial services agency that screens all arrestees for mental illness and dedicates a specialized supervision unit (SSU) to provide supervision and services while on pretrial release to all screened positive, including MHC participants. We compared criminal activity prior to key arrest with criminal activity post court disposition in MHC participants (N = 408) and MHC-eligible mentally ill arrestees in SSU (N = 687) receiving the same supervision and services while controlling for possible confounders. The proportion of MHC participants arrested was significantly lower in the year after MHC exit and significantly lower than that of the comparison group. They also averaged fewer rearrests and had a longer time to rearrest. MHC graduates made the greatest gains and accounted for the recidivism differences between MHC participants and the comparison group. This study adds to the accumulating evidence of the effectiveness of MHCs in reducing recidivism among offenders with severe mental illness.