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Letter: Attorneys applaud Mental Health Court

By [LETTERS TO THE EDITOR](#) |

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Butte County criminal defense attorneys share our community's concern with homelessness and we want the community to know there is help in reaching a solution: Mental Health Court.

Our work gives us the unique opportunity to see where criminality and homelessness intersect with untreated mental illness and drug addiction. We see how mental illness affects behavior and how, when not consistently treated, the illness can cause catastrophic harm to the community and the person.

We voice our collective support for the newly formed Butte County Mental Health Court. Persons deemed eligible for admission engage in rigorous, closely monitored mental health treatment, for two years; progress is reviewed regularly by a local judge with an emphasis on the well-being of the community and the person.

Mental Health Court is not an "easy out." Requiring intensive accountability in treatment, participation in the program is far more strenuous and demanding than serving a jail sentence.



As attorneys, we have seen genuine rehabilitation with the use of court mandated treatment. Participants become stable, regain mental acuity, reconnect with family, and get off the streets.

— *Butte County Defense Attorneys: Elizabeth Latimer, Janae Sorenson, Desiree Vance, Nicole Diamond, Philip Heithecker, Brenden Blake, Saul Henson, Kevin Sears, Grady Davis, Chris Carlos, Dennis Latimer, Denver Latimer, Braddon Hatch, Ron Reed, Kristen Cobery, Brandon Williams, Peter Washington, Stephana Femino, Roberto Marquez, Jesse Santana, Jonathan Griffith, Tahj Gomes, Jared Plaster, Matt Bently, Odeh Hijazeen, Susan Hearne, Ryan Lamb, Joe Feist, Steven Trenholme, and Jim Berglund.*



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