



Fall 2019

## *Treatment Courts Work as an Alternative to Incarceration*

A successful model of criminal justice reform has been **treatment courts**, which now celebrate 30 years of uniting public health and public safety professionals to reduce incarcerations and costs to taxpayers. As an alternative to incarceration, treatment courts provide life-saving treatment to people living with substance abuse and mental health disorders. There are more than 3,000 treatment courts operating in every state, four U.S. territories and more than 20 countries. The best known treatment courts are drug courts, which started in Miami in 1989 and are now ubiquitous through our country.

From drug courts to veterans' courts, Palm Beach County's alternative courts continue to lead the way to reduce incarceration and recidivism. They improve public safety at reduced cost by moving people with substance use and mental health disorders out of the criminal justice system into lives of recovery and stability. Indeed, treatment courts save taxpayers approximately \$6,000 per participant, and adult drug courts have been proven to reduce crime by as much as 58% and produce significant reductions in drug relapse.

Demonstrating Palm Beach County's leadership on this issue, State Attorney Dave Aronberg was recently selected to represent prosecutors nationwide for a six-year term on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). State Attorney Aronberg, who has made the opioid epidemic a focal point of his career, will serve as the only current prosecutor on the 20-member Board.

The NADCP is the premier training, membership and advocacy organization for the treatment court model. The organization started in 1994 and has trained hundreds of thousands of professionals spanning the legal, clinical, psychosocial and law enforcement fields.

The number one priority of the State Attorney's Office is to protect public safety. In appropriate cases, treatment courts can be an alternative to incarceration that is a win-win-win for public safety, taxpayer dollars and criminal defendants, who can finally overcome their addiction or treat their mental illness to become a law-abiding, productive member of society.

For more information about treatment courts and the NADCP, please visit [www.allrise.org](http://www.allrise.org).