



Misdemeanor Mental Health Court Team Training

## Directory of Resources

**Program Director Georgee Corley**  
(404) 613-5419

### Court Service Providers

**River Edge Behavioral Health** [river-edge.org](http://river-edge.org)  
265 Boulevard NE, Atlanta, GA 30312  
(404) 665-8600

**CHRIS 180** [chris180.org](http://chris180.org)  
(404) 486-9034

### Program Partners

**Office of the Solicitor General**  
(404) 612-4800

**Office of the Public Defender**  
(404) 612-5200

### Community Resources

**Mental Health America of Georgia** [mhageorgia.org](http://mhageorgia.org)  
(770) 741-1481

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)  
(800) 273-8255

**GA Crisis and Access Line (GCAL)**  
(800) 715-4225

### **Crisis Text Line**

Reach a trained counselor by texting  
"GA" to 741-741

**National Alliance on Mental Illness** [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)  
(800) 950-NAMI (6264)

**Veterans Crisis Line** [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)  
1 (800) 273-8255 press 1



Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk and State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter with the MMC Team and Graduates

## Positive Community Impact

- Strengthens rehabilitation connection between the court system and the mental health community
- Encourages safe and supported release of participants from the jail into the community, including housing and behavioral health treatment prior to release
- Enhances the interconnection of participants, crime victims and our community
- Reduces the incarceration and re-arrest of individuals with a mental health diagnosis
- Increases community confidence in the criminal justice system
- Improves the overall quality of life for the entire community

*"Graduation allows a participant's case to be sealed. This simple action restores our most vulnerable, opening doors of employment and housing once believed lost." – Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk*



## FULTON COUNTY MISDEMEANOR MENTAL HEALTH COURT

**Presiding Judges**  
Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk  
State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter

160 Pryor Street SW, Suite G47  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 613-5416

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5:00 pm

A Joint Misdemeanor Justice  
Project, housed in the Magistrate  
Court of Fulton County



## Who Are We

The Misdemeanor Mental Health Court is a voluntary court program to divert and support eligible misdemeanor citizen-defendants with mental health concerns. As Justice Partners, we recognize our duty to:

- Protect the public through intensive participant supervision;
- Reduce incarceration and recidivism of individuals with serious mental illness;
- Link participants with mental health and other services;
- Encourage participants to adhere to program conditions and requirements; and
- Improve the likelihood of ongoing success through treatment, access to housing and connections with critical supports.

Misdemeanor Mental Health Court participants meet specific medical and legal criteria to qualify for participation. We accept participants with cases from the jail, identified through First Appearance, as well as those participants from State Court, identified at Plea and Arraignment. Once an assessment determines that an accused is competent and willing to engage in the process and the current criminal charge is connected to a diagnosed behavioral health concern, the participant is further screened by the team for admission.

*"Incredible program! Mental Health is key to sustaining successful communities... This program deserves to be expanded broadly." - Attorney Joshua Schiffer*

## Referral Process

The Misdemeanor Mental Health Court team reviews each potential participant to ensure that referred cases meet program criteria. Decisions to accept or terminate a referral are made on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with the judge, solicitor general, public defender and mental health professionals. A participant may, at any time, opt out of the program and resume traditional prosecution.

### Individual Service Plan

An Individual Service Plan is created for each participant. This plan ensures the participant has the support necessary to complete the program successfully and is modified as the participant's situation warrants. Plans are developed to last the length of the program which may take up to 1 year.

### Aftercare

Once participants graduate, the program provides at least three months of ongoing support including status visits with behavioral health specialists.

*"Misdemeanor Mental Health Court is truly the light at the end of the tunnel for the participants, their families and our community. Where there has been darkness and little if any hope for supportive services, this Court has helped to fill that void." - State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter*

## Practices and Procedures

Once accepted, all participants attend the compliance calendar. This court check-in supports participants while their charges are pending. Program participants will be:

- Referred by pretrial staff, detention officer, public defender or another observer at the jail;
- Shared with the MMC Litigation Manager and Fulton County Behavioral Health Department staff;
- Signed up to participate and consents to comply;
- Interviewed by Behavioral Health team, connected to services for individual service plan, and discharge planning begins; and
- Required to appear in court as instructed by the Judge.
- Supported by the full Misdemeanor Mental Health Court

Once a participant complies with treatment and does not reoffend, the case is dismissed on the motion of the prosecutor. A graduation ceremony celebrates successful program completion. The program continues aftercare that provides follow-up and support.



Chief Magistrate Judge Cassandra Kirk and State Court Judge Patsy Y. Porter pictured with Magistrate Judges and Marshals