

MIDD 2 Initiative TX-RMHC: Regional Mental Health Court (RMHC)

How does the program advance the adopted MIDD policy goals?

This initiative will impact the adopted MIDD policy goal of “divert individuals with behavioral health needs from costly interventions, such as jail, emergency rooms, and hospitals.”

RMHC serves individuals experiencing behavioral health conditions (and frequently poverty and homelessness), who come into contact with the local criminal justice system. Once in jail, these individuals stay much longer than those with similar charges who are not experiencing behavioral health conditions. Moreover, these individuals are released to the community with limited behavioral health and social service supports critical to stability in the community.

Mental health courts provide a post-jail booking diversion¹⁹³ intervention, engaging individuals in community-based treatment and supportive services and reducing future jail bookings. Mental health courts provide regular court monitoring and extrinsic motivation and support for treatment engagement, to address some of the underlying factors contributing to criminal justice involvement.¹⁹⁴

1. Program Description

◇ A. Service Components/Design (Brief)

Until 2010, RMHC served individuals who had cases originally filed in District Court or King County Superior Court. In 2010, MIDD funding was used to increase the services available for existing mental health courts and expanded KCDC Mental Health Court to become regional, such that any city in King County could refer court-involved individuals experiencing significant mental illness to the RMHC.

Currently, there are three referral streams through which court-involved individuals can access RMHC. First, court-involved individuals can have cases filed directly into District Court. For tracking purposes, these cases are referred to as “misdemeanor cases.” Second, court-involved individuals can be referred to RMHC from any city jurisdiction within King County (referred to as “city cases”). Third, participants can be referred to RMHC from Superior Court when they have committed a felony and plead guilty to a lesser gross misdemeanor or combination of other misdemeanors (referred to as “felony drop-downs”).

¹⁹³ Sequential Intercept 3.

¹⁹⁴ Edgely, Michelle. “Why do mental health courts work? A confluence of treatment, support & adroit judicial supervision.” *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, Volume 36, Issue 6, November–December 2014, Pages 572–580.

◇ B. Goals

RMHC program goals are to:

- 1) Protect public safety
- 2) Reduce the level of recidivism (considering frequency, offense severity, and length of time between episodes) of persons with behavioral health conditions with the criminal justice system
- 3) Reduce the use of institutionalization for persons with behavioral health conditions who can function successfully within the community with service supports
- 4) Improve the mental health and well-being of persons with behavioral health conditions who come in contact with Mental Health Court
- 5) Develop more expeditious case resolution than traditional courts
- 6) Develop more cost-effective / efficient use of resources than traditional courts
- 7) Develop more linkages between the criminal justice system and the behavioral health system
- 8) Establish linkages with other community programs that target services to persons with behavioral health conditions.

◇ C. Preliminary Performance Measures (based on MIDD 2 Framework)¹⁹⁵

1. *How much? Service Capacity Measures*

This initiative serves 130 participants annually.

2. *How well? Service Quality Measures*

- Increased use of preventive (outpatient) services
- Increased housing stability

3. *Is anyone better off? Individual Outcome Measures*

- Reduced behavioral health risk factors
- Increased stability in treatment, employment or other quality of life measures
- Improved wellness and social relationships
- Reduced unnecessary incarceration

◇ D. Provided by: County

¹⁹⁵ Throughout 2017, review and refinement of Results-Based Accountability (RBA) performance measures for MIDD 2 initiatives will be conducted whenever applicable, in consultation with providers. Updates to performance measures that may result from this collaborative process will be reported in the next MIDD Annual Report in August 2018.

2. Spending Plan

Year	Activity	Amount
2017	RMHC supports and services continue.	\$3,865,746
2017 Annual Expenditure		\$3,865,746
2018	RMHC supports and services continue.	\$3,966,254
2018 Annual Expenditure		\$3,966,254
Biennial Expenditure		\$7,832,000

3. Implementation Schedule

◇ A. Procurement and Contracting of Services

King County District Court will continue to provide Regional Mental Health Court. No RFP is needed.

◇ B. Services Start date (s)

Services continued on January 1, 2017.

4. Community Engagement Efforts

This initiative is continuing from MIDD 1 with an established program model and minimal expected change. Routine stakeholder engagement that occurs as part of the ongoing delivery of this program includes ongoing operations meetings that include opportunities for input for the contracted behavioral health provider, and regular outreach to the Department of Social and Health Services, municipal jails, and other community behavioral health and housing providers for ongoing service delivery and care coordination improvements.