

Tuscola Mental Health Court

Contact Us

Program Coordinator

Melissa Caister
Phone: 989-672-1298
Email: mcaister@tuscolacounty.org

Treatment/Case Manager

Scott Wilkinson
Phone: 989-673-6191
Email: SWilkinson@tbhs.net

Online Information can be found at:

Tuscolacountycourts.org/trial-courts/circuit-court/tmhc



Tuscola Mental Health Court

440 N. State Street
Caro, MI 48723



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TMHC MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Tuscola Mental Health Court (TMHC) is to enhance public safety and reduce recidivism of criminal defendants who suffer from serious mental illness by connecting these defendants with Mental Health treatment services, and to connect them with appropriate community services to get back on track. The TMHC is intensive supervision combined with treatment and will assist offenders in achieve long-term stability, become law-abiding citizens, and become successful in their communities, therefore reducing recidivism and jail expenses to the community.

Trust

Honesty

Accountability

Success

Numbers to Know

Treatment Providers:

Tuscola Behavioral Health Systems (989) 673-6191
Tuscola Behavioral Health Peer Support (989)672-3353
Tuscola Behavioral Health Systems After Hours (800)462-6814
Access Number for Services (800) 448-5498
List Psychological (989) 673-5700

Tuscola County MDOC:

Department of Corrections Probation (989) 672-3760

Drug/Alcohol Testing:

Chance to Change drug and alcohol testing (989)286-3700
Tuscola County Jail (989)673-8161

Tuscola County Court:

MHC Program Coordinator (989) 672-1298
Circuit Court (989)673-3330

Tuscola Mental Health Court

DESIGNED FOR YOUR SUCCESS

The Tuscola Mental Health Court (TMHC) is a treatment oriented court with many community members encouraging your success in the program. Your treatment team includes Judge Amy Grace Gierhart, who will oversee your case while you are in TMHC. The team also includes a Treatment/case manager, a program coordinator, and representatives from the Prosecutor's office, Probation department, law enforcement, Peer support, Drug testing Liaison, and Defense attorney

Treatment courts are geared towards success through intensive treatment options, supervision, and accountability. Treatment courts have been extremely successful in reducing recidivism and encouraging participants to be productive members of the community. This program attempts to do this without the common 'criminal stigma' typically associated with involvement in the criminal justice system. If you have struggled or failed with traditional approaches, our program is designed to give the needed support to encourage success.

We are here to help you. Our diverse team can offer insight and suggestions that may not have been available to you during traditional court experiences. We want you to know we are invested in your successful completion of this program. We understand that change does not occur immediately and without intense work on your part and we want you to know that we are supportive of your choice to be a part of Tuscola Mental Health Court.

This handbook is designed to help you understand what is expected of you during your time in the program. All treatment is individualized based on specific needs and the input of the treatment team, and ultimately the Judge overseeing your case. It is up to you to ask questions and clarify any confusion you may have in regards to what is required of you.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Tuscola Mental Health Court is a specialty court that provides support and guidance while you navigate your success in the program. TMHC is designed specifically for those with severe and persistent mental illness. Participants will engage in varying levels of treatment during their time in the program. While in the program, participants will be provided with support and a network of mental health court professionals in varying disciplines, including mental health, probation, and court services. Participants will be expected to attend court twice per month. Each participant will sign an agreement, which outlines the expectations and obligations. The program is 15-18 months in length, with a minimum of one year in treatment. Once a referral to the Tuscola Mental Health Court is received, legal eligibility will be determined by the prosecuting attorney. The participant will then need to contact TBHS to schedule a clinical assessment. Once the assessment is completed, the TMHC team will deliberate on whether the participant is eligible for the TMHC program. If the participant is eligible, they will wait to start the program until sentenced to the program by the Circuit Court Judge. Orientation will take place after sentencing with Program Coordinator, and will then meet with MDOC probation officer and should already have an appointment scheduled with TBHS for treatment services.

Confidentiality

Each participant must consent to signing a release of information when the assessment is completed and again when the participant enters the TMHC program. This allows maximum coordination of care throughout the participant's time in the program. During each review hearing, once in the program, with the judge you will report on weekly progress towards the goals you have established, if sensitive information needs to be discussed, notify your treatment case manager prior to your review hearing, and adjustments can be made to ensure privacy. The TMHC program protects participants' health and legal information in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and part 2 of 42 CFR while making information available to the court team.

TMHC COSTS

Drug Testing: The price varies as to what test is used and required. Testing at Chance to Change is typically \$10 per test. Testing at the jail is no more than \$10 per test pending on what kind of test is administered. TMHC will pay for up to 2 tests month per participant to offset your financial responsibility while in the program.

Treatment Provider: Costs are based on insurance and income level. Please contact your treatment provider's billing department to get more information. All costs associated with treatment are paid through your treatment provider.

MDOC Probation fees: Cost varies, make sure you keep in contact with your probation officer to set up a payment plan.

SCRAM: MDOC- \$13/day-No installation fee

Circuit Court Fees: Cost varies, make sure you are in contact with Circuit court to set up a payment plan

All fees and costs are subject to change. Please be involved in your financial responsibility and review any questions and concerns with your Case manager.

TMHC TEAM MEMBERS

- **Tuscola County Circuit Court Judge**
- **Mental Health Court Program Coordinator**
- **MDOC Probation Officer**
- **Tuscola Behavioral Health Systems**
 - **Treatment Case Manager**
 - **Peer Support**
- **Tuscola County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney**
- **Tuscola County Defense Attorney**
- **Tuscola County Sergeant**
- **Chance to Change Drug/Alcohols Liaison**
- **Mental Health Support Personnel**

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TMHC PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Tuscola Mental Health court is a progressive program that is individualized and based on each individual's needs. As you advance through the TMHC program, requirements may decrease as an incentive or increase as a sanction.

Once sentenced to TMHC, you will begin the orientation process, Program paper work will be discussed and signed, and you will attend review hearings as scheduled, Attend Mental Health/Case management meetings weekly, begin stabilization on medications, remain compliant with drug/alcohol testing, and start the beginnings of a treatment plan with the case manager. These requirements will be required throughout your time in the program.

The requirements will be attending mental health treatment with your case manager, medication compliance and check-ins, drug/alcohol testing, court review hearings, probation appointments and any other individualized daily needs that need attentions, such as, housing, transportation, support, community service work, education, employment, ETC. These requirements will decrease in the amount of time in each area as you progress through the program. You will complete between 15-18 months in the TMHC program, graduation from TMHC will be discussed as a team, and a discharge plan will be completed.

Orientation

Orientation takes place after the participant is sentenced to the TMHC program. Orientation consists of signing the program agreement and discussing the program requirements. Once paperwork is signed, participants have consented to abide by all the rules and mandates of the program. Failure to abide by the terms may result in a sanction or termination from the program.

Mental Health Treatment

All participants must be eligible for TMHC program through the assessment process provided by Tuscola Behavioral Health Systems. Each participant should have their next treatment appointment scheduled prior to being sentenced to the TMHC program. Each participant is expected to meet with their treatment case manager once a week unless stated otherwise as treatment is at the discretion of the treatment provider and the TMHC team. During the treatment appointments, the participant and the treatment case manager will develop goals that can assist with mental health, medication compliance, program requirements, housing stability, employment, education programs, maintaining sobriety, transportation, healthy living, and more depending on what the participant's current situation.

Medication Compliance

Each participant will have to complete a diagnosis or psychiatric evaluation appointment. Once medications have been prescribed, if needed, the participant must take the medication as prescribed by the psychiatrist. This means taking medications daily unless you are on injectable medications or as needed medications. Side effects of medications should be reported as soon as possible. If you are having thoughts of self-harm or of harming others, you do not need to hear from your case manager, you should go to the local hospital as soon as possible.

Courtroom Expectations

You will show up to court as scheduled and on time. When court is in session, you are expected to sit quietly while the cases are being called, making minimal disruption. When entering the court room, appropriate attire is expected. Clothing covering all necessary parts of the body are required. Do not ask to be called first, do not schedule any appointments during the time of court unless this has been cleared by your case manager or the judge. Accommodations will be made for emergencies. You are expected to pick up any water bottles, wrappers, and trash that you bring into the court room.

Unacceptable attire includes, but not limited to:

- Tight, sheer, short or low cut clothing of any style
- Clothing with offensive, vulgar, racist, sexist, Obscene, or suggestive words, slogans, depictions or pictures
- Clothing that is dirty, or torn
- Tank tops, halter tops, and tube tops
- Hats, sunglasses and Bandanas
- Shorts or skirts that are short

Any clothing that shows undergarments

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- You will likely remain on probation for an extended period of time after graduating from the program. This does not mean that you have done poorly in the program. Use this as an opportunity to show what you've learned from the program!
- Don't focus on the minimum. Focus on yourself and be honest with what you really need. You may need to attend support groups more frequently, invest more time in individual counseling, or revisit group therapy sessions. Admitting to yourself that you may need more support is a sign that you are successfully addressing yourself and your needs!
- Everyone is different. Don't compare your progress and success to other participants. Accepting that individuality is one step closer to success.
- Be supportive. What may be difficult for you may be a breeze for someone else. If you reach out to other participants or TMHC team members you may find the support to be very beneficial.
- Please dress appropriately for Court, you do not have to dress in formal wear or suits, but appropriate attire is expected.

Drug/Alcohol Testing

To participate in this program, you are agreeing to zero tolerance of drugs and/or alcohol use. You will abstain from all alcohol/alcohol products, all non-prescribed medication, and all illegal drugs. You are also agreeing to not be in the presence of persons using, possessing or consuming said substances, nor enter premises where alcohol is being served without permission. You understand that you are not allowed to use marijuana for any reason, even if you have a medical marijuana card. You will be subjected to random drug and alcohol testing, any day of the week including weekends and holidays and will be provided with a call in number and pin to call daily.

Drug testing may also be conducted at review hearings. You will be observed by an officer or team member of the same gender while providing a sample. Failure to provide a sample will be considered a positive drug screen. Any tampering with a test, including using someone else's urine, dipping it in the toilet, or altering it in any other way will also be considered a positive screen. This may result in a violation and a sanction may be received.

Community Service, Employment, Education

Once you are stable with your medications, you and your case manager will begin to discuss ways to utilize your time in a productive way. Participants are expected to complete their community service requirement as requested by probation. You and your case manager will locate approved community service work. If you have completed your community service or are having a hard time locating community service, you are required to be doing something productive, approved activities could be verified employment, GED, college classes, work first program and anything else must be verified.

12-Step Meetings

You may be required to attend 12-step meetings during your time in the TMHC program. A list of all available meetings will be given to you during orientation. The amount per week that you may be required to attend is at the discretion of your Treatment Case Manager and/or Probation officer.

Graduation Requirements

To graduate from Tuscola Mental Health Court program the participant must maintain medication compliance, maintain sobriety for consecutive 90 days minimum, refrain from getting new charges in county or out of county, no sanction/violations for 90 days minimum prior to graduation, achieve a minimum of 15 months in the Tuscola Mental Health Court program, Completed Community service work requirement-If requested, attend all required appointments, and attended at least one year minimum of treatment with TBHS.

Graduation Ceremony

On the last day you are required to attend Tuscola Mental Health Court review hearing will be your last day in the program and will be considered successfully discharged. You will however continue on MDOC probation and the monitoring will continue per the probation officers recommendation. When you graduate you will receive a certificate of completion. Twice a year the Tuscola Mental Health Court will hold a graduation ceremony and invite the last six months of graduates back to celebrate your success.

SANCTIONS AND INCENTIVES

Incentives are provided throughout the program to encourage compliance. Examples of compliance can be: taking medications as prescribed, making all appointments, clean drug tests, and completing community service hours. Examples of non-compliance that can result in having a sanction can be: positive drug screens, failure to attend appointments, dishonesty, forging 12-Step meeting or community service sheets, engaging in any violent behaviors or absconding.

TERMINATION FROM TMHC

If the TMHC Judges feel that you are no longer a fit for the program based on negative performance, you may be terminated from the program. Termination will include a probation violation petition and formal violation hearing which could result in significant incarceration. The sentencing judge would resentence the participant on the original charges.

Examples of behaviors that will result in termination from TMHC:

- Crime of Violence/ "Violent offender"
- Absconding
- Multiple program non-compliance sanctions