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Sixth Judicial Circuit Receives Two Federal Grants for Drug Courts

CLEARWATER - Two separate \$500,000 federal grants have been awarded to Pinellas and Pasco counties – one to better assist women participants in Pasco County’s adult drug court struggling with addiction and experiencing symptoms of brain injury; and the other to offer special attention to participants in Pinellas County’s adult drug court who are struggling with a substance use disorder and prior sexual trauma.

Each of the grants – the \$498,755 awarded to Pasco, and the \$495,955 awarded to Pinellas – comes from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, which falls under the purview of the U.S. Justice Department.

The Sixth Judicial Circuit, which comprises the two counties, applied for the money along with the two counties’ county governments.

While all have been told they’ve been awarded the grants, the project services aren’t expected to launch until January.

The money earmarked for Pasco’s adult drug court, which will be dispensed over a three-year period, is intended to provide help for 120 women who may be having trouble working toward graduation from drug court because of underlying battles with brain injuries, which is often referred to as neurotrauma.

Up until now, services for women have focused on psychological trauma. With the new grant, protocols will be developed to also address any identified neurotrauma.

For instance, there will be brain-injury screening measures. And staff working in both residential and outpatient treatment programs where the women will be directed will be taught how to recognize neurotrauma, and what to include in their treatment protocol to address its symptoms. Those programs are run by WestCare, a non-profit organization.

A clinical neuropsychologist will be on hand for consultations, according to an abstract of the project.



Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Kimberly Todd

The money earmarked for Pinellas’s adult drug court, which also covers a three-year period, is intended to provide help to 110 men and women whose difficulty with battling their addictions might be related to the fact they had suffered sexual trauma.

The proposed program, called the AURORA Project (or AP), calls for an individualized treatment plan spanning six months for each of the 110 participants, and will utilize a combination of group, one-on-one and family therapy sessions. The non-profit organization overseeing the treatment will be the Center for Rational Living.

Pictured above is Pinellas-Pasco Circuit Judge Kimberly Todd, who presides over adult drug court cases in Pinellas County. The photo was taken Wednesday, Oct. 21, in her courtroom at the County Justice Center in Clearwater as she was going through that morning's calendar. Out of view are a correctional probation officer from the Department of Corrections, a prosecutor, an assistant public defender and members of drug court's staff. In addition to wearing a mask, Judge Todd is surrounded by plexiglass, as evidenced by the reflective quality of the picture.