

The TASC Connection



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

New President	2
Legislative Updates	2
El Paso Making the News	2
Special Recognition	3
Board Member Visit	3
AIM Young Adult Diversion	3
More on the SAP ACT	4

TASC 2019 Conference – *Life’s a Beach*

The 2019 Annual Training Conference will be April 10-12, 2019, at the **Galveston Island Convention Center at the San Luis Resort** located in Galveston, Texas. Approximately 700 attendees are anticipated!

Don’t forget to register by the deadline March 1st, 2019!

There is still time to submit proposals!! TASC is seeking proposals for sessions/workshops that present best practices in service delivery; programming that enhances outcomes for participants in adult, juvenile, family, and reentry treatment courts; DWI courts; Veterans Court; Mental Health Court; and workshops geared towards rural counties.

Please submit proposals by December 1st, 2018.

Please nominate any outstanding individuals and/or team for Outstanding Specialty Court Team Member, Devotion to Recovery, Courage and



Heart to Reach out to Others, Judicial Vision and Leadership, and Outstanding Specialty Court Team.

Also, start tapping into your creativity as this year there will be a Specialty Court Flag Competition at the conference. Specialty Court Teams will be asked to design a cloth flag (either front or double-sided) to represent their program and team. Each flag will be displayed at the conference

and prizes will be given to the top three flags. Prizes include the following:

1st Place – one designated team member receives Travel, Registration, and Hotel for 2020 Conference

2nd Place – one designated team member receives Hotel and Registration for 2020 Conference

3rd Place – one designated team member receives Registration to 2020 Conference

Increased Funding for Treatment Courts

On 09/26/18, The Office of National Drug Court Policy announced a \$4 million grant award to NADCP to expand training and

technical assistance to treatment courts over the next two years! The focus will be on helping programs meet the national Best

Practice Standards, improve efforts fighting the opioid epidemic, and more.

Mission:
The Texas Association of Specialty Courts (TASC) builds and strengthens Texas specialty courts through collaboration, advocacy and education.

Welcome New TASC President and Board Members

Julie Turnbull has seamlessly transitioned into the President position for 2019. Julie brings a wealth of experience and expertise to TASC with over 20 years of experience in Dallas County's DIVERT Program as the prosecutor, as well as serves as the Chief of the Reformatory Justice Unit in Dallas County's District

Attorney's Office.

The Board also welcomes new members Laura McCarty (Harris County Coordinator), Kimberly Duran (Dallas County DA's Program Clinician), Lesli Fitzpatrick (Williamson County Court Coordinator), Captain Lori Compton (Kaufman County Sheriff's Office), and Jose Montoya (El Paso County Peer Recovery Support

Specialist and Drug Court Graduate).

The current board engaged in a productive strategic planning retreat in Huntsville on August 22 - 24th.



Legislative Updates

A huge Thank You to Senator Cornyn for his leadership in getting the bi-partisan Substance Abuse Prevention Act passed and signed by the President. Super proud of Harris County STAR Drug Court graduate Erik R for sharing his recovery journey with a roomful of strangers AND TV cameras. He is living

proof that drug courts are an important strategy in addressing the opioid crisis. See more details about the ACT on page 4.



El Paso Making the Headlines

El Paso law enforcement, courts focus on treatment for defendants, not sentences.

An El Paso County conference focused on addressing the need for using different policies

and practices to help reform defendants in criminal cases.

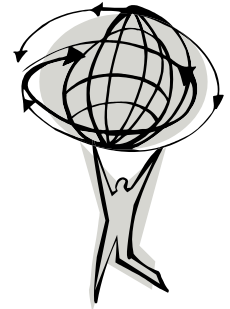
Check out the full story!

<https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/crime/2018/10/25/el-paso-county-law-enforcement-courts-focus-treatment-defendants-not-prison-sentences/1763484002/>

Special Recognition

Harris County's STAR Drug Court is celebrating 15 years!

Dallas County's DIVERT Drug Court is celebrating 20 years!



TASC Board Member making a visit

TASC Board member Faustino Lopez attended a graduation ceremony for the Hidalgo County Re-entry Court Program on November 6th. The Honorable 206th District Judge Rose Guerra Reyna is assigned oversee this specialty court program. The graduation ceremony was held at a local Luby's in Edinburg,

Texas. Breakfast was served for all 44 participants and three graduates. Every year near the Thanksgiving Holiday all specialty court participants are invited to a breakfast where they also have a chance to win some gift baskets.



AIM Court Program Avoiding Prison Time

Dallas County's DA-Driven Young Adult Pre-Trial Diversion Program is going into its third year presided by Judge Brandon Birmingham. Its overall mission is to deliver smart justice by empowering young adults to become productive and

contributing members of society. Since its conception, the program has avoided sentencing 1,081 years of prison time to first-time felony young adult offenders. The Program has graduated 56 young adults.



"I am a better person from the AIM Program because they gave me a second chance when I felt like I had no other options."

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We're on the Web!

<http://www.tasctx.org>

**Check us out on
Facebook!**

What is the Substance Abuse Prevention Act?

The *Substance Abuse Prevention Act* reauthorizes drug abuse programs and provides assistance to various agencies to better combat opioid addiction and support those recovering from substance abuse.

Office of National Drug Control Policy: Reauthorizes the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) at the White House, which oversees Executive Branch efforts on narcotics for to complement and strengthen state and local anti-drug activities.

Drug Abuse Prevention Programs: Reauthorizes several important programs under the ONDCP including the Drug-Free Communities Program and the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program and allows the ONDCP Director to participate in and expand opioid and heroin awareness campaigns which were authorized under the *Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act* (CARA).

Drug Courts: Reauthorizes Department of Justice funding for drug courts, which provide targeted interventions for individuals with drug addiction and substance abuse disorders and allows non-profit organizations to provide important training and technical assistance to drug courts.

DEA 360 Strategy: Authorizes the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to conduct a pilot program in partnership with healthcare and community organizations to raise awareness of substance abuse, strengthen community organizations that provide long-term substance abuse assistance, and target criminal organizations responsible for increasing the supply of illicit narcotics.

Supporting Families with Substance Abuse Challenges: Provides resources to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for screening, treatment, supportive housing, and interventions in order to help support families as they battle substance abuse challenges.

Abuse-Deterrent Opioids: Eliminates barriers that previously prevented members of group and individual health plans from accessing abuse-deterrent opioids and requires commercial and Medicare plans to educate practitioners on abuse prevention efforts, including the use of abuse-deterrent opioids.

Overdose Reversal: Requires hospitals that accept Medicare and Medicaid patients to provide overdose reversal medication and a referral to treatment options as part of the discharge protocol for overdose patients.

Better Substance Abuse Treatment: Directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to conduct a study on reimbursements for substance use disorder services and make recommendations in order to bring parity to and improve reimbursements.

Educating Prescribers: Requires Attorney General and HHS Secretary to complete a plan for educating and training medical practitioners in best practices for prescribing controlled substances.