



NEWS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

**Hon. Kris Singh
Administrative Judge
Fourth Judicial District**

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Warren County Opens New York's First Superior Court for Veterans Treatment

LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK—Fourth Judicial District Administrative Judge Kris Singh today announced the opening of the Warren County Veterans Treatment Court (VTC), New York State's First Superior Court for Veterans Treatment. The new VTC is a problem-solving court with jurisdiction to serve justice-involved veterans, experiencing addiction and/or mental health challenges, charged with any criminal offense in the county or adjacent counties. The new VTC, located in the Warren County Courthouse at 1340 State Route 9 in the Warren County Municipal Center in Lake George, NY, is a collaborative effort of the New York State Unified Court System's Fourth Judicial District, the Warren County District Attorney's Office, the local defense bar, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Warren County Department of Probation, and local treatment and service providers. The Court System's Office for Justice Initiatives' Problem-Solving Justice Division, led by Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Edwina G. Richardson, and Statewide Coordinating Judge for Problem-Solving Courts Debra J. Young have been involved throughout the planning and implementation of the new VTC.

Veterans Treatment Courts provide access to substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and other individualized supports as part of court-ordered accountability and supervision. The VA's Veterans Justice Outreach Coordinator, veteran peer mentors, veteran services providers, probation officers, veteran service providers, and other community partners work together to address the unique needs of justice-involved veterans, including connecting them with VA benefits and services. An important component in ensuring a successful VTC is the use of peer mentors — military veterans who volunteer their time to provide guidance, encouragement and support to justice-involved veterans throughout the process.

Veterans who do not pose a risk to public safety and who are willing to comply with court-imposed conditions may be considered for participation in the VTC. Veterans with prior or current service from the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard may be eligible for referral, regardless of discharge status. Referrals to the VTC may be made by defense counsel, prosecutors, clinicians, probation officers, veteran service agencies and other community partners. All referrals will be reviewed by the Warren County District Attorney's Office and the veteran's defense attorney. Veterans will be assessed to determine eligibility for substance use treatment, healthcare, housing, clinical services, and available benefits. Participants who successfully complete the program may be eligible to have their charges reduced or dismissed.

The Honorable Robert A. Smith, who will preside over the Warren County Veterans Treatment Court, said, "As a community, we owe a profound debt of gratitude to those who have served our country. Many veterans return home carrying invisible wounds. This court recognizes that those challenges can sometimes contribute to their involvement in the justice system. The creation of the Warren County Veterans Treatment Court reflects our community's commitment to honor that service by connecting these individuals with the resources, structure, and support they need to achieve stability, accountability and lasting recovery, while still holding them accountable. By combining rigorous judicial oversight with access to treatment, mentorship and peer support, the Veterans Treatment Court will offer a compassionate yet disciplined path forward. I am deeply honored to preside over Warren County's first Veterans Treatment Court and grateful to our team of partners whose collaboration makes this possible. Together we reaffirm our duty to those who have already fulfilled theirs."

Deputy Chief Administrative Judge Richardson said, "Veterans Treatment Courts were born from the idea that justice-involved veterans are navigating challenges connected to their service. This VTC, and all our VTC's, represent the Unified Court System's commitment to ensuring that those who served in our military have access to treatment, structure, mentorship, court supervision, and the support they need to move forward in a meaningful way."

Administrative Judge Singh said, "We are very pleased to establish another Veterans Treatment Court in the Fourth Judicial District. I am grateful to the many individuals and entities who collaborated to bring this program to fruition, helping ensure that those who have served our country have access to the support and services they need."

Coordinating Judge Young said, "Those who serve our country most bravely often return home to find their lives made more difficult due to mental health and substance abuse issues directly related to their service. Veterans Treatment Courts are acutely aware of issues that are unique to military life, and as such are well positioned to offer rehabilitative options to our justice-involved veterans. I am excited for the opening of this court and am so grateful to those that helped bring it to fruition. With Judge Smith at the helm, I am confident that we will be able to help Warren's veteran community rebuild with dignity and hope."

Warren County District Attorney Jason Carusone said, "Veterans Treatment Court is about accountability with a purpose. By setting clear expectations with rigorous supervision and evidence-based treatment, we honor our veterans' service while addressing the conduct that brought them before the court. This approach promotes responsibility, supports lasting recovery, and strengthens public safety for Warren County."

Warren County Public Defender Gregory Canale said, "At the Warren County Public Defender's Office, we believe in a holistic approach to justice — one that looks beyond a case file to the person behind it. Our veterans have given so much to our country, and many return with invisible scars that lead to justice involvement. This new Veterans Court allows us to meet our clients where they are, providing the specialized support and treatment they've earned while ensuring our community remains safe and restorative."

Director/CVSO Warren County Veterans' Services Denise A. DiResta, SGT, USA (Ret), said, "My staff and I are honored to support the Warren County Veterans Treatment Court program and look forward to assisting those Veterans with dedicated support and resources through this difficult time in their lives. They have served our country and have earned the right to receive those benefits that are available to them."

Jeremy R Duers M.A.T., USMC Veteran, Administrator, Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer to Peer Program for Warren/Washington County, said, “The Adirondack Peer to Peer Veterans Program is well suited to provide mentors to guide the veterans through the Veterans Treatment Court. Not only can we be a “battle buddy” as they navigate the justice system, but we can connect them with other non-VA resources and social events that improve the quality of life for them and their family as well. This is a tremendous opportunity to join forces for those that sacrificed so much for our country.”

The current point of contact for VTC referrals is Kellee Strong, VTC Coordinator. Ms. Strong can be contacted at kstrong@nycourts.gov.

The country’s first VTC was launched in Buffalo, New York in 2008 and has since served as a national model. With the launch of the Warren County VTC, there are now 39 VTCs operating in 30 New York counties encompassing urban, suburban, and rural communities.

For more information about New York’s VTCs and other problem-solving courts, visit: https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/problem_solving/

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