



SAN FRANCISCO COLLABORATIVE COURTS

Behavioral Health Court

San Francisco’s Behavioral Health Court (BHC) was created in 2002 in response to the increasing numbers of mentally ill defendants cycling through the jails and courts. The mission of BHC is to enhance public safety and reduce recidivism of criminal defendants who suffer from serious mental illness by connecting them with community treatment services - and to find appropriate dispositions to the criminal charges by considering the defendant’s mental illness and the seriousness of the offense. BHC is a collaborative effort of the San Francisco Superior Court, Office of the District Attorney, Office of the Public Defender, Adult Probation Department, Department of Public Health, Jail Reentry Services, UCSF Citywide Case Management Forensics, the Sheriff’s Department, and other San Francisco Community Treatment providers. BHC averages **130 clients** at any given time.

2018 Statistics

- BHC **accepted 25 clients** into the program. **44%** of exiting clients **completed the program successfully**.
- 80% of newly accepted BHC clients were Male, 20% were Female.
- 52% were Black/African American, 24% White, and 16% Other.
- 52% of new clients had a Primary Diagnosis of Psychotic Disorder, 24% Schizophrenia, and 8% Bipolar.
- 92% of entering clients reported a history of homelessness.
- 46% of clients that completed BHC in 2018 were homeless at entry; **100% had stable housing at exit**.
- Since 2003 over **500 clients** have successfully completed the program.

78%

of 2016 and 2017 BHC graduates avoided arrest within 1 year of graduation*

72%

of 2016 and 2017 BHC graduates avoided arrest within 2 years of graduation*

60% Graduation Rate from 2008 to 2018
85% Retention Rate from 2008 to 2018

**Includes clients who graduated and successfully completed the terms of their probation; San Francisco County arrests only.*

Two Studies of BHC

Saves Money¹

- On average, each participant saves the criminal justice system over **\$10,000** during the first year of BHC (as compared to the previous year).

Reduces Recidivism²

- BHC participation reduces the probability of a new criminal charge by **26 percent** in the 18 months after entering the program.
- BHC participation reduces the probability of a new **violent** criminal charge by **55 percent** in the 18 months after entering the program, when compared to other mentally ill inmates.
- Length of jail time for BHC participants was reduced by 36.8%



Superior Court of California
County of San Francisco



City and County of San Francisco

¹ "Examining Program Costs and Outcomes of San Francisco's Behavioral Health Court – FULL REPORT". Authored by Arley Lindberg, MSW, May 2009.

² "Effectiveness of a Mental Health Court in Reducing Criminal Recidivism and Violence." Authored by Dale E. McNiel, Ph.D and Renee L. Binder, M.D, September 2007.