

**House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies**

**FY 2023 Public Witness Testimony**

**Statement of Carson Fox, J.D.  
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Chairwoman DeLauro, Ranking Member Cole, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, I am honored to have the opportunity to submit my testimony on behalf of nearly 4,000 treatment courts and the 150,000 people they will connect to lifesaving substance use and mental health treatment this year. Given the ongoing substance use crisis, **I am requesting that Congress provide funding of \$105 million for the Drug Treatment Court Program at the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for fiscal year 2023.** SAMHSA provides critical funding to enhance and expand substance use and mental health services to treatment courts.

I serve as the chief executive officer of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), the leading training, advocacy, and membership organization for the more than 4,000 treatment courts, including drug courts and veterans treatment courts, nationwide. Treatment courts provide an evidence-based solution to individuals and communities in crisis and this year will serve approximately 150,000 people—reuniting families, preventing overdoses, cutting crime, and saving taxpayer dollars.

When I began my career as a prosecutor in South Carolina in the 1990s, I saw what so many across the country were seeing: the same individuals appearing before the court time and time again because of their substance use disorders. In response, I helped launch the first treatment court in South Carolina. Individuals with substance use disorder coming before the

court were connected to evidence-based treatment and recovery support services while still being held accountable. This combination stopped the revolving door, and I saw countless individuals regain their lives and reunite with their families.

More than three decades later, treatment courts across the country are on the front lines of the substance use disorder epidemic. These programs are leading a comprehensive, evidence-based response that promotes community-based treatment and offers wraparound services to improve housing, employment, and family reunification. Critical to their success is the use of FDA-approved medication for the treatment of opioid use disorder (MOUD).

With overwhelming empirical evidence showing their effectiveness, it is easy to see that treatment court programs across the country merit continued funding. The Government Accountability Office found the drug court model reduces crime by up to 58%. Further, the Multi-Site Adult Drug Court Evaluation funded by the Department of Justice confirmed drug treatment courts significantly reduce both drug use and crime, as well as provide a cost savings averaging \$6,000 for every individual served. Additional benefits include improved employment, housing, financial stability, and reduced foster care placements.

Beyond the statistics, there are real people whose lives and families are profoundly changed by the treatment court model. I can think of hundreds of inspiring treatment court success stories I have encountered in my career, people who are parents, veterans, professionals, young and old; treatment courts have saved individuals from every walk of life.

Take Abby for example. Like so many, her struggle with substance use disorder was generational. Her father's alcohol addiction took a devastating toll on her family, but his example was not enough to keep her from using substances. She started experimenting at the age of 12, and by 17, she was selling drugs to support her addiction. Abby began a vicious cycle of arrest,

punishment, and resumed drug use. After what would be her final arrest, she was offered drug treatment court. While in the program, she received an individualized treatment plan and had the structure, accountability, and access to the services she needed. In 2006, Abby graduated from Maine's Washington County Adult Drug Court program. She is now a mother to her children and uses her experience to help others as a substance use response coordinator working closely with treatment court programs throughout the state of Maine.

In 2014, knowing just how effective treatment courts are, the governor of Maine awarded Abby a full pardon. I am proud to say Abby is also a member of the NADCP Board of Directors, helping shape and guide our organization.

Abby is not alone in her success. Since their inception, treatment courts have led 1.5 million people into lives of recovery. The court team offers the tools to overcome substance use disorder and past trauma to create meaningful, healthy relationships. Support from the Drug Treatment Court Program at SAMHSA has helped hundreds of courts over the years provide critical treatment services to save lives, reunite families, and restore communities.

As our country continues to battle the ongoing substance use disorder epidemic, we know there are many more people who still need this opportunity. I strongly urge this committee to recommend funding of \$105 million to the Drug Treatment Court Program for fiscal year 2023 so treatment courts can continue providing substance use treatment that allows people to heal from the inside out.