



## Supreme Court of Appeals State of West Virginia

# News

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### **Two justices to attend opening of Kanawha County Juvenile Drug Court**

For immediate release Thursday, April 19, 2012

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – A ceremony announcing the opening of the Kanawha County Juvenile Drug Court will be held at noon on Tuesday, April 24, in the Kent Carper Justice and Public Safety Complex, 301 Virginia St. E., Charleston.

Eleventh Family Court Circuit (Kanawha County) Judges Mike Kelly and Kenneth Ballard will be the presiding judges of the drug court.

Supreme Court Justice Robin Jean Davis and Justice Brent Benjamin will attend the opening, as will Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Chief Judge Louis H. “Duke” Bloom; Kanawha County Commission President Kent Carper; and Mike Lacy, Director of Probation Services for the Supreme Court Administrative Office.

There currently are twelve other juvenile drug courts serving sixteen counties in West Virginia. McDowell County also is developing a juvenile drug court.

West Virginia juvenile drug courts are cooperative efforts of the juvenile justice, social service, law enforcement, and education systems. They divert non-violent juvenile offenders exhibiting alcohol or substance abuse behavior from the traditional juvenile court process to an intensive, individualized treatment process. The goal is to reduce future court involvement for these youth.

On any given day in West Virginia, approximately 6,500 youths are under some form of court-ordered diversion program or supervision by a probation officer. Annual West Virginia juvenile probation reports demonstrate that controlled-substance violations are the third-largest category of offenses charged. This fact is the motivating reason behind the development of juvenile drug courts in West Virginia.

For more information about drug courts in West Virginia, see the Probation Services section of the West Virginia Judiciary website: <http://www.courtswv.gov/court-administration/probation/probation-services.html>.

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