



DRUG TREATMENT COURTS

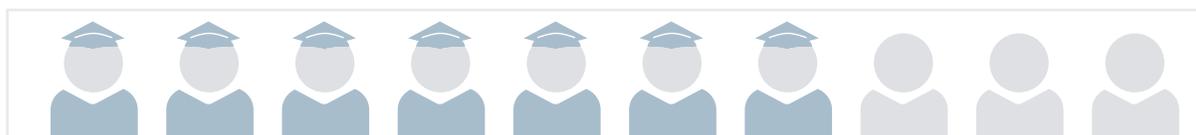
BACKGROUND:

CBA supports innovative and responsible approaches to justice, including specialized courts such as mental health, Indigenous, domestic violence and drug treatment courts. Drug Treatment Courts (DTCs) are pre-sentence treatment programs that try to rehabilitate non-violent offenders. DTCs divert offenders away from imprisonment on the condition they complete an intensive, judicially-supervised drug addiction recovery program.

These programs are proven to deliver a significant return on investment to society by reducing costs associated with policing, courts, and corrections, as well as decreased systemic marginalization, victimization, and property loss.

DTCs have been operational in Calgary and Edmonton since 2005 and 2007, respectively, and they have been operating in other parts of North America for more than 25 years.

The **majority of participants** who graduate from **intensive, judicially-supervised drug addiction recovery programs** become **contributing, tax-paying members of society**. For example, **7 out of 10 graduates** from Calgary's Drug Treatment Court have **no new criminal charges** or convictions post treatment.¹



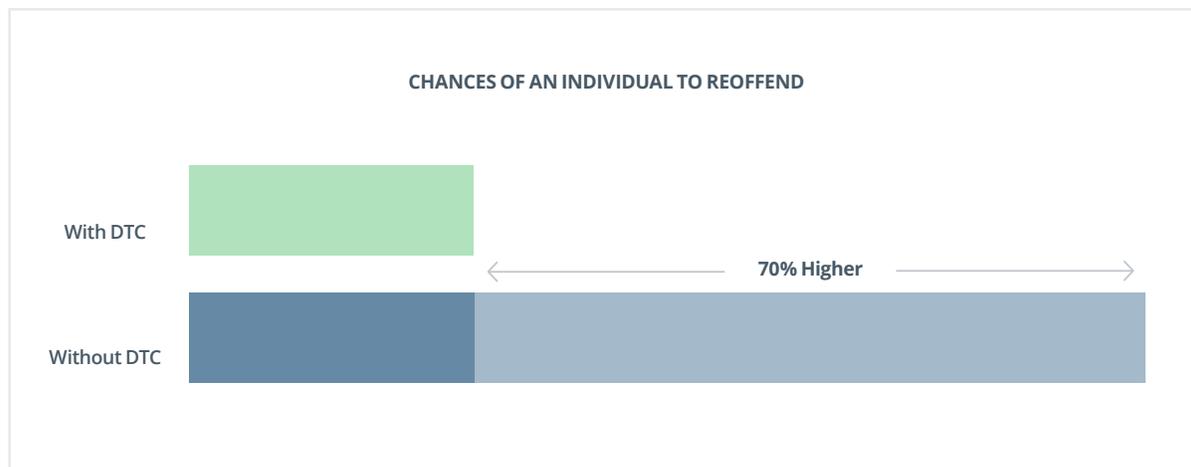
THE ISSUE:

The provincial and federal governments should strive to divert people with addictions and mental illness away from the criminal justice system and direct them towards programs to support rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

CBA Alberta members are concerned about the shortage and the lack of stability of funding for DTCs in Calgary and Edmonton.

¹ Calgary Drug Treatment Court. 2018. Calgary Drug Treatment Court. Accessed 12 04, 2018. <http://calgarydrugtreatmentcourt.org/>.

These programs are **proven effective for affected individuals**, and they **save the entire system** significant costs over the long-term by diverting individuals from incarceration, facilitating their productive return to society, and **reducing** recidivism rates.²



Demand for DTC programs have exceeded their capacity from the start. Historically, funding has come from government. However, continuous reductions in government funding has decreased the number of people the programs are able to serve.

Studies suggest that the **average cost** of having an **individual in custody is 2.5 times higher** than the cost of putting **that person in a Drug Treatment Court program**.³

Private funding has made up a portion of the difference, but it is inadequate to provide the stable, predictable, and sustainable core operating funding required to make a meaningful, measurable difference over the long-term.

Inadequately funding the programs saves only a small amount of money and result in almost immediate net losses in other areas. There is evidence that people otherwise served by the program would return to crime, use other social services, and occupy police, court, and corrections resources.

WHY CBA IS INVOLVED:

One of CBA's goals is to promote and improve the administration of and access to justice and equality, supporting the corollary benefit of crime reduction. It benefits members of the CBA and society as a whole to work toward ensuring the public has a fair, effective, and efficient justice system. CBA supports innovative and responsive approaches to justice, including specialized courts such as mental health, indigenous, domestic violence and DTCs.

DTCs proactively support those struggling with addictions and add value to the justice system as a whole, and their programs are a critical component of an integrated approach, which increases awareness, support, and advocacy regarding the social issues impacting the justice system.

² Edmonton John Howard Society. 2018. "Drug Treatment Court Services." Edmonton.

³ Matchett, Terrence. 2013. <http://calgarydrugtreatmentcourt.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/AlbertaDTCs-An-Essential-Part-of-Albertas-Justice-Strategy.pdf>. Provincial Court of Alberta.

DESIRED OUTCOME:

An increase in stable, predictable government funding in DTC programs would significantly increase the capacity of the DTC programs to divert eligible people, as well as play a key role in reducing drug use and criminal involvement among repeat offenders suffering from the disease of addiction.

The CBA supports the provincial and federal governments extending the funding commitment for the DTCs and, as part of that effort, establishing the DTCs in the province as permanent fixtures of our criminal justice system. Funding of the DTCs and other drug treatment courts fits with results-based budgeting, and the goal that government programs deliver maximum value for tax dollars to Albertans.

CASE STUDY:

#1

Ryan* had “given up on life” prior to his last arrest in 2011. After hearing about the DTC program, and wanting to make a change for the better, he voluntarily assigned himself to the Calgary DTC.

Since graduating from the program in 2013, Ryan has been successfully employed and credits the stringent program for his recent marriage and child, as well as the return of the children he had previously lost due to his addictions.

CASE STUDY:

#2

Ten years ago, Amy* was facing a serious addiction issue. She was in and out of the criminal system, felt completely lost, and thought she had no options.

She had five children, but all of them were apprehended by the authorities (her youngest at only two weeks of age).

Amy applied to the Edmonton DTC and successfully graduated from the program. She regained custody of all of her children, and she is now employed at the Edmonton DTC helping others work through their addiction.

Her children are doing well, and the oldest is now attending university.

** REAL STORIES: Names have been changed*

WORKS CITED

Calgary Drug Treatment Court. 2018. Calgary Drug Treatment Court. Accessed 12/04, 2018. <http://calgarydrugtreatmentcourt.org/>.

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