



**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF MERCED**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERCED SUPERIOR COURT TO INITIATE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT

Merced Superior Court announced today that it will begin a Veterans Treatment Court on Tuesday, July 18, 2017. This collaborative court is designed to assist veterans involved in the criminal justice system with mental health and substance abuse issues stemmed from their military service to obtain necessary services and reduce recidivism.

The mission of this court is to work with veterans who have been charged with a felony or misdemeanor offense(s) and divert eligible veteran-defendants with substance dependency and/or mental health issues from traditional court processing to a treatment-based problem-solving court. With over 11,000 veterans in the county of Merced, the goal is to provide those that need this service with the resources and treatment they deserve as veterans.

The Merced Veterans Treatment Court is a collaborative effort between the Court, Probation Department, County Public Defender, County Deputy District Attorney, and the Veterans Justice Outreach. According to Superior Court Judge Harry Jacobs, who will be the presiding over this calendar is a former member of the armed services in the Air Force, "The men and women who will be participating in our Veteran's Treatment Court have all served our country; in some cases they have many years of honorable service; but because of a service-related condition they have become entangled with the Criminal Justice system. California law mandates that we give them special consideration, and the Veterans Treatment Court offers them an opportunity to get back on track and lead productive lives again. It is simply the right thing for us to do."

There are Veterans Courts in numerous counties in California and the Merced Superior Court is pleased to be offering this Treatment Court in our county.

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