



**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Hall of Justice and Records**  
**400 County Center**  
**Redwood City, CA 94063**

**Hon. Mark R. Forcum**  
**Presiding Judge**

**Hon. George A. Miram**  
**Assistant Presiding Judge**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** Redwood City, CA

**DATE:** March 22, 2004

**CONTACT:** Hon. Mark R. Forcum, Presiding Judge 650-363-7835

### **Court Announces Bridges Dual-Diagnosis Program**

San Mateo County Superior Court Presiding Judge Mark R. Forcum announced today that the Court's Bridges Program will be expanded to provide treatment for defendants with drug and alcohol addiction and related mental illnesses. The San Mateo County Superior Court and the Probation Department developed the new Bridges Dual-Diagnosis Program, after the Department and Court obtained federal and state grant funding.

Chief Probation Officer Loren Buddress stated that "according to community corrections expert, Professor Edward Latessa, 'the Bridges program is one of the finest day treatment programs in the country,' and this expansion of a model program will meet a significant need within our community." Judge Forcum, one of the Judges who developed the Bridges Program, said that the new program will only admit non-violent offenders, who have a history of drug and alcohol abuse and mental illnesses that can be effectively treated. Forcum went on to say that, "the program's goal is to build on the success of the treatment approach used in the Bridges Program in combination with therapy and monitoring to ensure that offenders take appropriate medications."

Supervisor Mike Nevin, who advocated the development of this type of program, said that this innovation epitomizes the positive and collaborative nature of problem solving in San Mateo County Government. Supervisor Nevin had met with Presiding Judge Forcum, Assistant Presiding Judge George Miram, Court Executive Officer Peggy Thompson, and Chief Buddress last year to explore ways to develop a treatment court for defendants with substance abuse and mental health problems.

The original Bridges Program, conceived by the Court and built by the collaborative efforts of the Court, Probation, District Attorney's Office, Private Defender Panel, and Sheriff's Office, has a success rate of about seventy percent, which is excellent for an addicted population in a substance abuse treatment program. This high rate of success played a large role in obtaining federal and state funding for this newest enhancement.

Judge Miram, who chaired the original program's yearlong development said, "Bridges unique day treatment model combining drug and alcohol counseling and job skills training reduces repeat recidivist crime and saves taxpayer dollars." Judge Miram added that, "the Court is optimistic that this expansion will continue the course created in Bridges to reduce crime, while rebuilding offenders' lives."

The expanded Bridges Dual Diagnosis Program will start next week and will be overseen by Judge Forcum on a weekly basis.

###