**All Rise National Treatment Court Month Toolkit**

**May 2024**

**Sample Op-Ed**

**All Rise: Treatment courts save lives and strengthen communities**

For three decades, there has been a growing movement to transform the way the justice system responds to individuals with substance use and mental health disorders. Rather than continuing the revolving door of addiction and related crime, treatment courts break the cycle by holding individuals accountable while connecting them with the treatment and support needed to change their lives. This approach is no longer an experiment; approximately 4,000 treatment courts across the nation have proven to be the most successful justice intervention in our nation’s history, helping not just individuals, but their families and communities find hope, healing, and recovery. These programs are a place where when one person rises, we all rise.

Each May, All Rise hosts National Treatment Court Month to shed light on how this approach is saving lives and making our community safer.

Here in [location], we offer [name treatment court types]. Treatment courts like ours differ from traditional court because we invite treatment providers and other public health professionals to be a part of the team. They ensure each person in our program receives an individualized, evidence-based treatment plan, and work together with the judge, defense attorneys, prosecutors, probation, and law enforcement to provide ongoing support and accountability. This approach allows our treatment court to identify and meet individual needs beyond clinical treatment, such as education, employment, housing assistance, family reunification, restitution, and healthcare.

[Insert a brief graduate success story. Example: Several years ago, a young woman entered our treatment court. After years of struggling with a substance use disorder, she resorted to stealing to support her addiction. She was arrested numerous times, but nothing changed. She was facing years in prison when she got the chance to participate in our program, where she met regularly with a case manager and received rigorous treatment and counseling. With the help of the court team, she began to put her life back together. While in the program, we helped her enroll in college and find a job. She completed the treatment court program and went on to get her bachelor’s degree and reconnect with her family. Today, she has no criminal record holding her back. She is happy, healthy, employed, and contributing to our community.]

This story is just one powerful reminder that when one person rises out of addiction and finds recovery, we all rise. And it is just one of the thousands of individual stories that demonstrate why treatment courts are so critical in the effort to address addiction and related crime. The research agrees: Numerous studies have found that treatment courts reduce crime and drug use and save money. These programs also improve education, employment, housing, financial stability, and family reunification, which reduces foster care placements. Treatment courts represent a compassionate approach to the devastation of addiction. This year’s National Treatment Court Month celebration should signal that the time has come to reap the economic and societal benefits of expanding this proven solution to all in need.