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# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**November 1, 2023**

## **SUPERIOR COURT OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY LAUNCHES NEW CARE COURT WEBPAGE ONE MONTH IN ADVANCE OF DECEMBER 1 CARE COURT IMPLEMENTATION**

**[www.LACourt.org/CARE](http://www.LACourt.org/CARE) Provides County Residents Valuable Information and Resources Regarding the Upcoming Launch of CARE Court in Los Angeles County**

The Superior Court of Los Angeles County, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH), today launched [www.LACourt.org/CARE](http://www.LACourt.org/CARE) where Los Angeles County residents will find valuable information relating to the upcoming December 1 Los Angeles County implementation of the Community Assistance, Recovery and Empowerment (CARE) Act, or "CARE Court", Presiding Judge Samantha P. Jessner announced.

"In collaboration with our County partners, the Court has built a single and accessible resource where interested residents can learn about the new CARE Court process well in advance of CARE Court's implementation in Los Angeles County on December 1," Presiding Judge Jessner said.

"By providing residents access to this information early, we hope to empower our communities with knowledge of how the CARE Court process may provide vulnerable individuals suffering from severe mental health disorders the care they need, and deserve, to stabilize and succeed."

**-MORE-**

## **NEW CARE COURT WEBPAGE 2-2-2-2**

The CARE Act, passed in 2022, created a new voluntary civil court process to connect eligible adults impacted by a specific class of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders to mental health and other support services to empower them to lead full and autonomous lives. Initially set to launch in Los Angeles County on December 1, 2024, the Court and the County agreed in January 2023 to launch CARE Court one year earlier than required by law to provide early access to this new valuable tool to support those suffering from qualifying severe mental health conditions.

“The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, working in collaboration with the Chief Executive Office, Superior Court, and Public Defender, look forward to providing an additional option for individuals seeking mental health services for themselves or loved ones that best meets their needs,” said LACDMH Director Dr. Lisa H. Wong. “Creating accessible pathways for successful intervention is ultimately the goal, no matter what services or options are sought.”

A voluntary process, CARE Court will allow qualified individuals – such as a family member, spouse, roommate, emergency responder or licensed medical or mental health professional – to petition the Court for an eligible individual to receive treatment through CARE Court. A full list of those qualified to petition on another person’s behalf for CARE Court is available on the [new webpage](#).

To be considered eligible for CARE Court, individuals must be:

- 18 years of age or older;
- Diagnosed with a disorder within the "schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders" class of disorders and currently experiencing symptoms;
- Not clinically stabilized in ongoing treatment;
- The individual's mental health is substantially deteriorating, and they are unlikely to survive safely in the community without supervision and/or need services and support to prevent relapse and deterioration; and
- Participation in a CARE Plan is the least restrictive alternative and the individual is likely to benefit from participation in a CARE Plan.

**-MORE-**

## **NEW CARE COURT WEBPAGE 3-3-3-3**

Individuals who agree to participate in CARE Court can receive services, including mental health, housing and other support services, via a voluntary CARE Agreement or a CARE Plan overseen by a judicial officer. The CARE Agreement or CARE Plan may include offers of community-based mental health resources, housing, and more. Under both, individuals can receive services for approximately one year, up to a maximum of two years. Review hearings will be scheduled periodically to assess the individual's progress and monitor the accountability of service providers.

To ensure that civil liberties continue to be respected for those enrolled in CARE Court, the LA County Independent Defense Counsel's Office (IDCO), through the Public Defender's Office, will provide free legal representation.

"The Public Defender's Office, through its Independent Defense Counsel Office, created a specialized panel of approximately 50 attorneys to represent respondents in LA County CARE Court," said Marco Saenz, IDCO program director. "And while IDCO's attorneys will be providing legal assistance, their primary role will be as advocates, encouraging clients to follow their individual CARE Court programs while making sure they receive the full range of social and clinical services they need to lead safe and productive lives."

Ricardo D. Garcia, LA County Public Defender, added: "Unlike traditional judicial proceedings that focus on compelling compliance through punishment, CARE Court takes the opposite approach. It creates a specific judicial process to pull together holistic services for respondents while surrounding them with a team of family members and professionals to help them stay on track. We're delighted that IDCO will be playing such a key role in this innovative and humane approach."

The [new webpage](#) includes information on how and where individuals can file CARE Court petitions, including electronic filing options, and where individuals can receive support services to assist them through the CARE Court petition process.

**-MORE-**

**NEW CARE COURT WEBPAGE**  
**4-4-4-4**

As set forth on [the webpage](#), on December 1 the Court will initially open CARE Court in Department B and Department Z at the Norwalk Courthouse, 12720 Norwalk Blvd., Norwalk, with plans to relocate CARE Court departments to a more central location in the County in the future. At that time, CARE Court participants can attend hearings in person at the Norwalk Courthouse, or remotely from any location with an internet connection. For those without access to a stable internet connection, effective December 1, the Court will also provide dedicated private spaces for remote appearances at 11 Self Help Centers across Los Angeles County and at the Hollywood Courthouse.

The new webpage is mobile-friendly and available in multiple languages. For more information, visit [www.LACourt.org/CARE](http://www.LACourt.org/CARE).

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