

# SOUTH EUCLID MUNICIPAL COURT



**JUDGE**  
*Gayle Williams-Byers*

**CLERK OF COURT**  
*Chardale P. Sumpter*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 28, 2017

**Contact:** Shallanna Agbomanyi  
**Phone:** (216) 381-2880 ext. 212  
**Email:** sagbomanyi@secourt.org

## **South Euclid Mental Health Docket Receives State Re-Certification**

The South Euclid Municipal Court remains the only Suburban Municipal Court in Cuyahoga County to receive Ohio Supreme Court certification for a Specialized Mental Health Docket. The F.R.E.E. (Fighting Recidivism by Elevating Excellence) docket has again earned final certification from the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets. This certification extends through December 31, 2019.

In order to receive the certification, the local court had to submit an application, undergo a site visit, and provide specific program materials in response to certification standards that went in to effect in January 2014.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor congratulated the South Euclid Municipal Court and Judge Gayle Williams Byers for receiving final certification. "Specialized dockets divert offenders toward criminal justice initiatives that employ tools and tailored services to treat and rehabilitate the offender so they can become productive members of society," said Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor. "Studies have shown this approach works by reducing recidivism while saving tax dollars."

Specialized dockets are courts that are dedicated to specific types of offenses or offenders and use a combination of different techniques for holding offenders accountable while also addressing the underlying causes of their behavior. There are more than 210 specialized dockets in Ohio courts that deal with issues such as:

- Drugs and Alcohol
- Mental Health
- Domestic Violence
- Human Trafficking

The standards provide a minimum level of uniform practices for specialized dockets throughout Ohio, and allow local courts to innovate and tailor to meet their community's needs and resources.

"South Euclid court began the FREE docket in an effort to reduce recidivism among those who suffer with severe and persistent mental illnesses. I understand that many times mental health challenges are the root cause issue for some offenders who appear in court. It is important that we address them as appropriately as possible," said Judge Byers who believes that criminal behavior can be changed when a person is connected with the proper service providers. "The FREE docket delivers important treatment and socialization services designed to help someone make permanent changes to a stable, law abiding life. We are excited to be able to continue this important work," she added.

For more information regarding the South Euclid Municipal Court FREE docket, visit [www.secourt.org](http://www.secourt.org) or follow us on Facebook @SouthEuclidMunicipalCourt and Twitter @SE\_Court