



# Superior Court of California

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## Superior Court News

03/19/01

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **SUBJECT: Santa Clara County Superior Court Commences Juvenile Mental Health Court**

The Santa Clara County Superior Court has assumed a national leadership role in addressing the issues of juvenile mental health by holding the nation's first Juvenile Mental Health Court (JMHC) on Wednesday, February 14, 2001, thus increasing effectiveness of community mental health treatment for juvenile offenders who are accused of less serious offenses. Supervising Judge Raymond J. Davilla, Jr. will preside over this specialized court every second and fourth Wednesday afternoon of the month.

The juvenile justice system has become a common pathway for many youth with serious mental illness who have had a protracted involvement with the juvenile justice system. Through early identification of available resources for those youth suffering from developmental disabilities, organic brain syndromes, and brain conditions with a genetic component, the goal of effective juvenile rehabilitation and community safety is addressed as well as expediting the processing within the juvenile justice system for youth with serious mental illness. The Court has accomplished this feat through a collaborative effort involving judicial officers, prosecutors, public defenders, mental health representatives, juvenile probation, and treatment provider representatives.

Judge Davilla's JMHC will effect a more humane treatment of juveniles with serious mental illness, help relieve the overcrowding of detention facilities, and decrease recidivism among youth. Judge Davilla states, "The JMHC will give us many more options in the proper treatment of these youth as well as the protection of our community. This is truly a team effort which will continue to adjust as we better define the needs of our juvenile population."

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