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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Today the Hunt County Attorney's Office placed the first Hunt County resident into its Veterans Pretrial Diversion program. Previously, there was no specialized mental health treatment provided to Hunt County veterans who committed a misdemeanor offense and suffered from a pre-existing mental illness. These veterans were treated like all other Hunt County defendants.

The program is designed to divert Hunt County veterans from the traditional criminal justice system, and uses a non-adversarial approach with a team comprised of prosecutors, defense counsel, VA mental health specialists, Veteran's Services Officer, and a Hunt County Community Supervision Officer. The team works together with the veteran to assess his or her needs and recommend a customized treatment plan that's main objective is to successfully rehabilitate the veteran. Participating veterans are expected to progress through a series of closely monitored incremental phases culminating with in-person assessments at the end of each phase. The program takes 12 to 24 months to complete, depending upon the nature of the offense and other considerations.

All veteran applicants are personally interviewed before acceptance into the program. The program is available to any Hunt County resident with a pending misdemeanor in Hunt County who served active duty, reserves, guardsman, or retiree, who suffers from a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, or other mental health problems resulting from his or her military service.

If the Hunt County veteran successfully completes the program, the pending criminal case will be dismissed and the Hunt County Attorney's

Office will handle expunction proceedings on behalf of the veteran for the related offense.

If you or someone you know is a Hunt County veteran with pending criminal charges in need of mental health services, please contact the Hunt County Attorney's Office Veteran's Hotline at (903) 408-4112. Although the County Attorney Office cannot provide legal advice concerning a pending criminal charge, it can provide guidance on the Veterans Pretrial Diversion program and steps that must be completed for consideration. If the situation is an emergency, please contact your local law enforcement agency.