

# The State of Washington



## Proclamation

*WHEREAS*, amidst a rising fentanyl epidemic, increasing fatal overdose rates, and an ongoing mental health crisis, drug courts and other therapeutic courts are an important part of an effective statewide continuum of care for individuals with behavioral health disorders; and

*WHEREAS*, Washington state is a national leader in creating meaningful pathways out of the legal system and towards recovery and family reunification, having supported some of the earliest therapeutic courts in the country, and these innovative courts are now operating in nearly every county and level of court statewide; and

*WHEREAS*, therapeutic courts work, with annual Department of Social and Health Services' analyses showing that Washington's adult drug courts can reduce recidivism and increase employment among program participants; and

*WHEREAS*, therapeutic courts have an upstream impact, helping to interrupt what is often a generational cycle of substance use and legal involvement and prevent adverse childhood experiences associated with parental substance use, incarceration, and foster care; and

*WHEREAS*, therapeutic courts prove that compassionate public policy can result in cost savings and significantly improved personal health status, with studies by the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Washington Institute for Public Policy, and the University of Washington showing a return on investment related to therapeutic courts in Washington state;

*NOW, THEREFORE*, I, Jay Inslee, governor of the state of Washington, do hereby proclaim May 2024 as

### *Therapeutic Court Month*

in Washington, and I urge all people in our state to join me in this special observance.

Signed this 11<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024

Governor Jay Inslee

