



THE
STEPPING UP
INITIATIVE

January 12, 2026

Minutes

Attendees: Abena Bediako, **HEART**; Antoinette Carter, **Durham County Sheriff Department**; Michele Easter, **Duke Psychiatry**; Roshanna Humphrey, **JSD**; Wendy Jacobs, **Durham Board of County Commissioners**; Eric Johnson, **Alliance Health**; Patricia Knautd, **Jail Mental Health**; Lao Rubert, **Local Re-entry Council**; Renee Shaw, **JSD**; Mike Sstrom, **City of Durham- Criminal Legal System Task Force**; Selma Smith, **Carolina Outreach**; Marc Strange, **JSD**; Doretta Walker, **Judge**; Helen Trip, **Durham County EMS**; Tonya VanDeinse, **UNC School of Social Work**; Angela Winchester, **Department of Adult Corrections-Community Corrections**

Mental Health Court Expansion Initiative-Final Report (Tonya VanDeinse)

- Grant submitted in 2021; implementation 2021–2024; extension into 2025.
- Evaluation conducted by UNC School of Social Work.
- Goals included streamlined screening, co-located clinician, enhanced services, diversion programming, probation collaboration, and cross-agency training.

Evaluation Objectives & Findings

- Process evaluation: able to assess implementation and barriers.
- Outcome evaluation: not possible due to missing data, lack of program differentiation, and small sample size.

Key Implementation Findings

- Lack of clear differentiation between MHC and MHCEI.
- Case management widely viewed as successful.
- Proposal aims not fully implemented (e.g., unclear justice liaison role, inconsistent use of validated tools).
- Collaboration challenges across DA, PD, liaison, and partners.

Recommendations & Next Steps

- Pilot improved data collection.
- Conduct self-assessment using 10 Essential Elements of Mental Health Courts.
- Strengthen MOU and standard operating procedures.

Committee Discussion Highlights

- Court never saw most screened individuals, major drop-off between screening and referral.
- Attorneys often pursue quicker case resolutions.
- Community service capacity (ACTT/CST) is insufficient.

SIM Mapping Update Planning

- 2026 update to be held in person.
- Tentative date: April 20, 1:30–5:00 PM.
- Facilitators: Tanya and Tremaine.

Subcommittee Updates

- Forensic Community Support Team preparing to launch.
- Stabilization Unit updates: Care Navigation, Familiar Neighbors, Street Outreach, Survivor Care, Homeless Services.

Future Agenda Items

- Familiar Faces initiative update.
- Expanded stabilization programs presentation.

Next Meeting: April 13, 2026