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**SB-28 Treatment court program standards.** (2025-2026)

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AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 23, 2025

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 10, 2025

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE— 2025–2026 REGULAR SESSION

**SENATE BILL**

**NO. 28**

**Introduced by Senator Umberg  
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Krell)**

**December 02, 2024**

An act to amend Section 11972 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to courts, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SB 28, as amended, Umberg. Treatment court program standards.

Existing law, the Drug Court Programs Act, authorizes counties to implement a drug court program, that, if implemented, requires a county alcohol and drug program administrator and the presiding judge in the county to develop a plan that includes, among other things, drug courts for juvenile offenders and drug courts for parents of children in certain family law cases. Existing law requires counties and courts that opt to have treatment court programs to design and operate the programs in accordance with state and national guidelines. Existing law requires the Judicial Council to, by no later than January 1, 2026, revise the standards of judicial administration to reflect state and nationally recognized best practices and guidelines for collaborative programs including those described in these provisions.

Existing law, the Treatment-Mandated Felony Act, an initiative measure enacted by the voters as Proposition 36 at the November 5, 2024, statewide general election, authorizes certain defendants convicted of specified felonies or misdemeanors to participate in a treatment program, upon court approval, in lieu of a jail or prison sentence, or grant of probation with jail as a condition of probation, if specified criteria are met. The Legislature may amend this initiative by a statute passed in each house by a rollcall vote entered in the journal,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the membership concurring, or by a statute that becomes effective only when approved by the voters.

This bill ~~would instead require that treatment court programs be available to all eligible California defendants. The bill~~ would include a new standard that, as part of the treatment court program, a drug addiction expert, as defined, conducts a substance abuse and mental health evaluation of the defendant, and submits the report to the court and the parties. The bill would remove

the requirement that the Judicial Council revise the standards of judicial administration. The bill would require that a treatment program that complies with existing judicial standards be offered to a person that is eligible for treatment pursuant to the Treatment-Mandated Felony Act. By requiring the court to implement a treatment program that complies with existing judicial standards, the bill would amend that initiative statute.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Vote: 2/3 Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

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## THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

### ~~SECTION 1. Section 11972 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:~~

~~11972. (a) Treatment court programs shall be available to all eligible California defendants. Courts shall ensure the programs are designed and operated in accordance with state and national guidelines incorporating the "Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards" and "Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards" developed by All Rise (founded as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals), with consideration for the distinct court system within which the program operates. It is the intent of the Legislature that key components of the criminal adult treatment court programs include:~~

~~(1) Integration by treatment courts of behavioral health treatment services with justice system case processing;~~

~~(2) Promotion of public safety, while protecting participants' due process rights, by prosecution and defense counsel using a nonadversarial approach;~~

~~(3) Early identification of eligible participants from the appropriate high-risk and high-need target population and prompt placement in the treatment court program;~~

~~(4) Access provided by treatment courts to a continuum of substance use and other behavioral health treatment and social services that are evidence based and meet the specific needs of the participant;~~

~~(5) Frequent alcohol and other drug testing to monitor abstinence;~~

~~(6) A system of incentives, sanctions, and service adjustments to achieve participant success;~~

~~(7) Ongoing judicial interaction with each treatment court participant at the needed frequency to meet the needs of the participant;~~

~~(8) Monitoring and evaluation to measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness;~~

~~(9) Continuing interdisciplinary education to promote effective treatment court planning, implementation, and operations;~~

~~(10) Forging partnerships among treatment courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations to generate local support and enhance treatment court program effectiveness and to coordinate access to needed complementary services outside the program;~~

~~(11) Working to ensure equitable access, services, and outcomes for all sociodemographic and sociocultural groups;~~

~~(12) Including a drug addiction expert to conduct a substance abuse and mental health evaluation of the defendant. The expert shall submit a report of the evaluation to the court and the parties. For the purposes of this paragraph, "expert" includes, but is not limited to, a psychiatrist, psychologist, a person as described in Section 5751.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or a person whose knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education qualifies them as an expert.~~

~~(b) A treatment court program that complies with these standards shall be available and offered to a person that is eligible for treatment pursuant to Section 11395.~~

~~(c) Treatment court programs in this section shall be used to satisfy the requirements in Section 11395.~~

### **SECTION 1. Section 11972 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:**

**11972. (a)** Counties and courts that opt to have treatment court programs shall ensure the programs are designed and operated in accordance with state and national guidelines incorporating the "Adult Treatment Court Best Practice Standards" and "Family Treatment Court Best Practice Standards" developed by All Rise (founded as the National Association of Drug Court Professionals), with consideration for the distinct court system within which the program operates. It is the intent of the Legislature that key components of the criminal adult treatment court programs include:

(1) Integration by treatment courts of behavioral health treatment services with justice system case processing.

(2) Promotion of public safety, while protecting participants' due process rights, by prosecution and defense counsel using a nonadversarial approach.

(3) Early identification of eligible participants from the appropriate high-risk and high-need target population and prompt placement in the treatment court program.

(4) Access provided by treatment courts to a continuum of substance use and other behavioral health treatment and social services that are evidence based and meet the specific needs of the participant.

(5) Frequent alcohol and other drug testing to monitor abstinence.

(6) A system of incentives, sanctions, and service adjustments to achieve participant success.

(7) Ongoing judicial interaction with each treatment court participant at the needed frequency to meet the needs of the participant.

(8) Monitoring and evaluation to measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.

(9) Continuing interdisciplinary education to promote effective treatment court planning, implementation, and operations.

(10) Forging partnerships among treatment courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations to generate local support and enhance treatment court program effectiveness and to coordinate access to needed complementary services outside the program.

(11) Working to ensure equitable access, services, and outcomes for all sociodemographic and sociocultural groups.

~~(b) No later than January 1, 2026, the Judicial Council shall revise the standards of judicial administration to reflect state and nationally recognized best practices and guidelines for collaborative programs, including those described in subdivision (a).~~

*(12) Including a drug addiction expert to conduct a substance abuse and mental health evaluation of the defendant. The expert shall submit a report of the evaluation to the court and the parties. For the purposes of this paragraph, "expert" includes, but is not limited to, a psychiatrist, psychologist, a person as described in Section 5751.2 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, or a person whose knowledge, skill, experience, training, or education qualifies them as an expert.*

*(b) A treatment court program that complies with these standards shall be available and offered to a person that is eligible for treatment pursuant to Section 11395.*

*(c) Treatment court programs in this section shall be used to satisfy the requirements in Section 11395.*

**SEC. 2.** This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the California Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to facilitate the implementation of Proposition 36, an initiative measure enacted at the November 5, 2024, statewide general election, this act must take effect immediately so that treatment courts have a program available for defendants who choose to participate.