Dear Judge Owens:

I am following up to see if you obtained the information you were seeking from your earlier request regarding drug testing protocols for adult drug courts and, particularly, for family drug courts.  We received several responses on the listserve that related to the timeframe required or appearing by responding programs  -- which we can summarize and send to you -- but I wasn't sure if you were seeking other information re frequency, etc. that you still needed.  I believe NADCP will be included 'drug testing" as one of the standards to be published as a follow up to the earlier set.

However, I can tell you from our experience with working with adult drug courts:

(1) the most prevalent type/method of drug testing continues to be urine testing.  Other methods (hair, for example) have limited utility, as further described in a resource publication we did a number of years ago (link attached);
(2) frequency:  the prevailing view is that drug testing should be frequent, random, and not be decreased as the participant progresses in the program even though other requirements may be relaxed (e.g., attendance at treatment, self help groups, court hearings, etc.)
By "frequent" , I believe that testing at least two times per week is the prevailing recommended practice -- with testing available/conducted on weekends and holidays as well as weekdays.   However, one (unrecommended)  practice that we are finding is that many programs test more frequently -- three times a week, for example, but not *randomly --* which is a critical component of the sustained behavioral change drug courts are designed to promote.  So many programs develop a drug testing protocol designed to*catch participants using*, rather than to promote their long term behavioral changes associated with their  drug use.  For example, it has not been uncommon for us to find programs requiring testing Monday, Wednesday and Friday (leaving the weekend open.....) or to require testing when the participants comes to treatment, etc.  Not only do these practices defeat the concept of "random" testing but they unnecessary numbers of tests  are also costly and burdensome on both the program and the participants.

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