

# Minnesota Statewide Drug Court Evaluation

## Use of Cost Effective Evidence-Based Practices

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### What do we know about Cost Effective Practices for Drug Courts?

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In 2008, NPC Research issued [Exploring Key Concepts](#), a study comparing practices of 18 Adult Drug Courts across the nation.<sup>1</sup> The report identified practices that, if implemented, were found to be more cost effective than traditional case processing, or “business-as-usual,” with participants eligible for Drug Court. The report identified the practices that saw “Improvement in Outcome Costs.”

#### What are Outcome Costs?

- Costs incurred due to criminal justice recidivism
- Recidivism costs include re-arrests, new court cases, probation time served, and incarceration (jail and prison)
- Outcome costs were calculated as the percent improvement in outcome costs for the drug court group in relation to the comparison group

### Do Minnesota Drug Courts use the practices found to be cost effective?

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#### Statewide Drug Court Evaluation

Currently, the State Court Administrator’s Office is conducting a statewide evaluation of Adult and Hybrid (Courts accepting DWI and non-DWI offenders, like drug offenders) Drug Courts. A timeline of the evaluation can be found on the Minnesota Judicial Branch website along with other details of the evaluation (<http://www.mncourts.gov/?page=494>).

#### Comparing Information in the Statewide Evaluation to the NPC Report

Some of the research questions in the Statewide Drug Court Evaluation relate to practices analyzed the NPC Report. This is an assessment of practices employed in Drug Courts in Minnesota, as compared to the findings of the NPC Report, and the use of the practices in the courts included in that analysis.

Improvements in Outcome Costs for drug courts “not using practice” represent the improvement in Outcome Costs of Drug Court over business-as-usual, even without the practice. Improvement in Outcome Costs for drug courts “using practice” represent the improvement in Outcome Costs for drug courts using the practice, over business-as-usual.

#### Highlights of the Comparison

- Of the twenty practices analyzed, Minnesota Drug Courts implement all practices found to be cost effective, but to varying degrees depending on the court.
- All courts completed Drug Court Planning Initiative (DCPI) training prior to implementation, which may show up to 15 times greater improvement in Outcome Costs than courts not receiving the training.

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<sup>1</sup> Shannon Carey, et al. (2008). *Exploring the Key Components of Drug Courts: A Comparative Study of 18 Adult Drug Courts on Practices, Outcomes and Costs*. Portland, OR: NPC Research.

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### How do Minnesota Drug Courts compare to the courts in the NPC Report regarding implementation of these practices?

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- Minnesota Drug Courts had a higher proportion of courts using each practice, as compared to the courts included in the NPC Study on nineteen of the twenty measures compared.
- Minnesota Drug Courts, collectively, implement more of the cost effective evidence-based practices than the courts analyzed as part of the NPC Report

The drug courts included in this analysis (and the Minnesota Statewide Drug Court Evaluation) can be found on the Minnesota Judicial Branch Drug Courts website [here](#).

### What does this mean for Minnesota Drug Courts?

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- Minnesota Drug Courts may see **similar improvements in Outcome Costs as the courts in the NPC Report**
  - Individual NPC Evaluations of the 18 courts found **a range of drug court cost savings**.
  - The evaluations found **Costs Avoided per Participant** (per 2 year period) ranged from **\$900 per participant to \$5,000 per participant**

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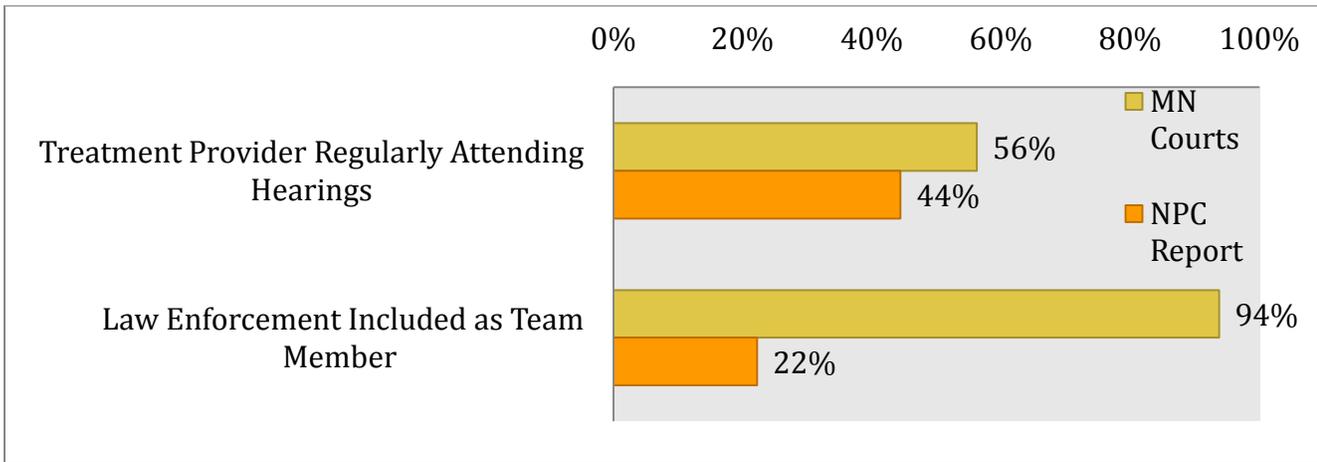
### Research Question: Do drug court teams work together collaboratively?

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcomes Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Treatment Provider Regularly Attending Hearings	4%	35%
Law Enforcement Included as Team Member	12%	49%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- Over half of Minnesota Drug Courts require treatment providers to attend drug court hearings, which is slightly higher than the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 9 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts without treatment providers at hearings.
- Almost all Minnesota Drug Courts have law enforcement included as team members, which is 4 times more than the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 4 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts without law enforcement as a team member.



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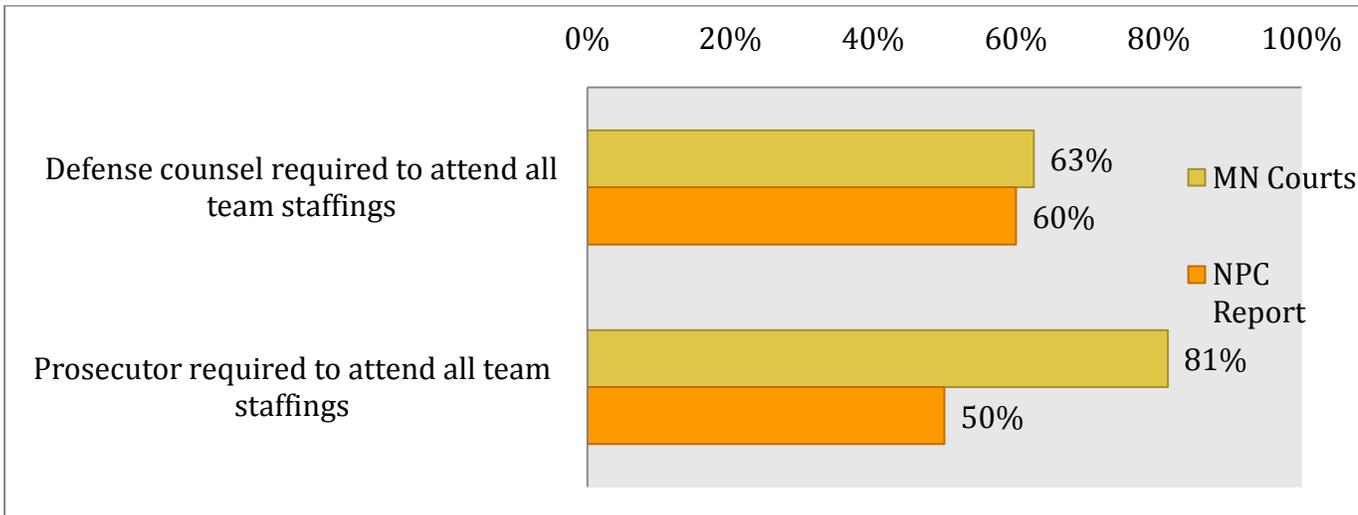
**Research Question: Are the distinct roles of the prosecutor and defense counsel maintained in drug court?**

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcome Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Defense counsel required to attend all team staffings	5%	41%
Prosecutor required to attend all team staffings	14%	38%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- Almost two-thirds of Minnesota Drug Courts require defense counsel to attend drug court staffings, which is similar to the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 8 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts in which defense counsel does not attend staffings.
- Over 80% of Minnesota Drug Courts require prosecutors to attend drug court staffings, as compared to only half the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 3 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts in which the prosecutor does not attend staffings.



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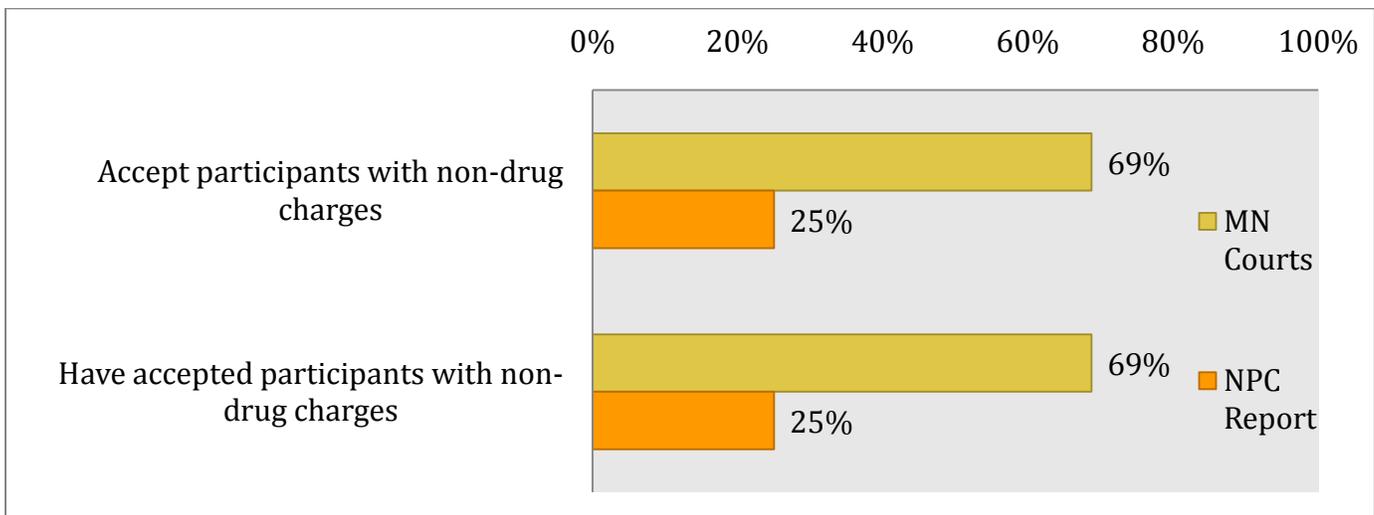
### Research Question: Are participant eligibility criteria flexible?

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcomes Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Accept participants with non-drug charges	22%	37%
Have accepted participants with non-drug charges	22%	37%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- Over two-thirds of Minnesota Drug Courts have policies that allow non-drug offenders into drug court, which is almost three times more than the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 2 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts that do not allow participants with non-drug offenses in their drug courts.
- In addition to having policies allowing for admission for non-drug offenders, those courts also actually have participants admitted for non-drug offenses.



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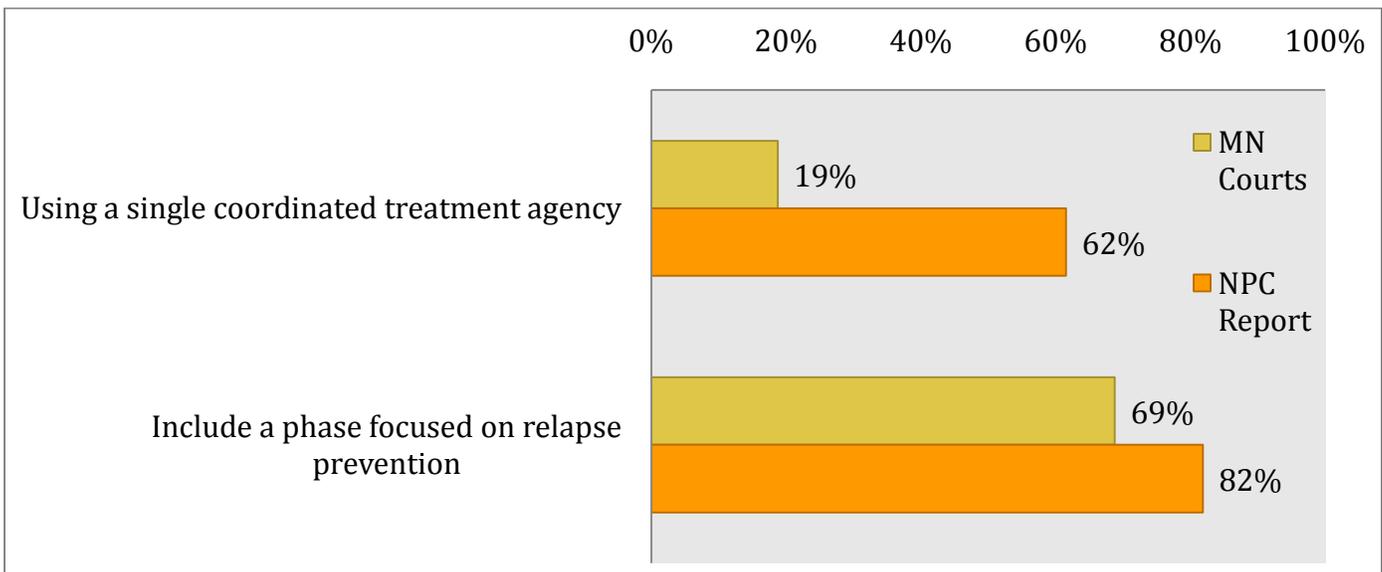
**Research Question: Is there a coordinated strategy governing responses of the drug court team to each participant's performance and progress?**

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcome Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Using a single coordinated treatment agency	3%	36%
Include a phase focused on relapse prevention	13%	41%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- Less than two-thirds of Minnesota Drug Courts use a single coordinated treatment agency, as compared to almost two-thirds of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 12 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts who use multiple treatment agencies.
- Over two-thirds of Minnesota Drug Courts include a phase in their process that focuses on relapse prevention for participants, which is less than the 82% of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 1.3 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts that do not include a phase for relapse prevention.



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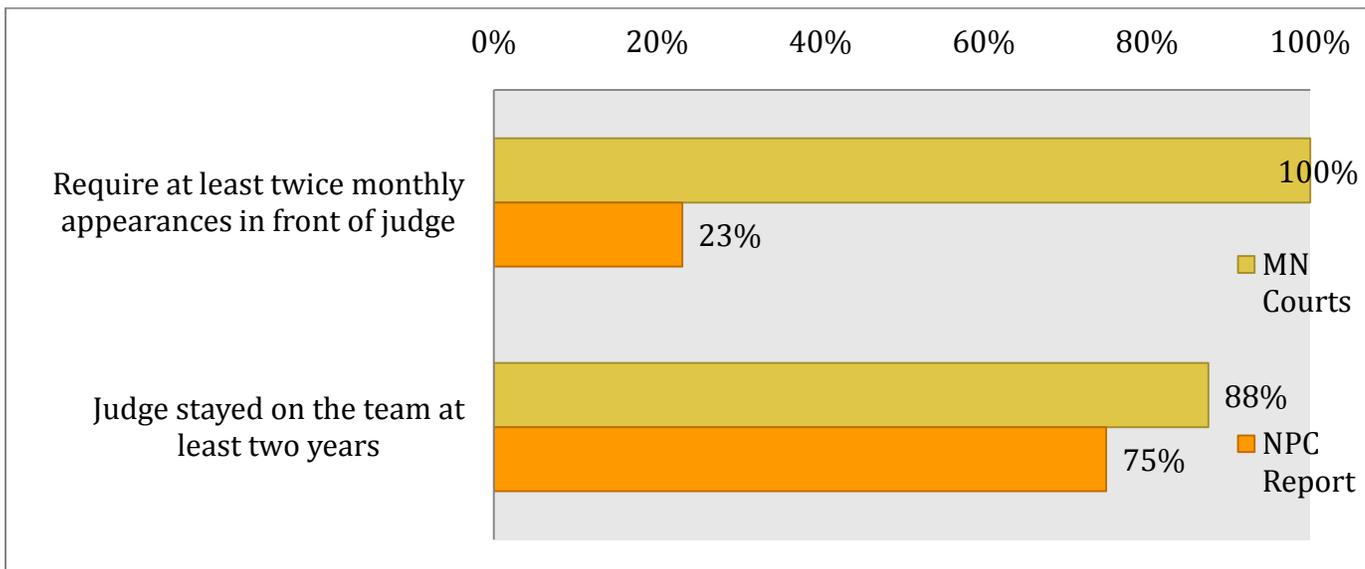
**Research Question: Do drug courts require participants to appear in front of a judge at least twice monthly for the first four months?**

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcomes Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Require at least twice monthly appearances in front of judge	19%	39%
Judge stayed on the team at least two years	8%	25%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- All Minnesota Drug Courts require participants to appear in front of the drug court judge at least twice monthly in the first phase, as compared to less than one quarter of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 2 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts who do not require twice monthly appearances with the judge.
- Almost all (88%) Minnesota Drug Courts have a judge that stayed with the team at least two years, as compared to three quarters of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 3 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts in which the judge does not stay with the court for at least two years.



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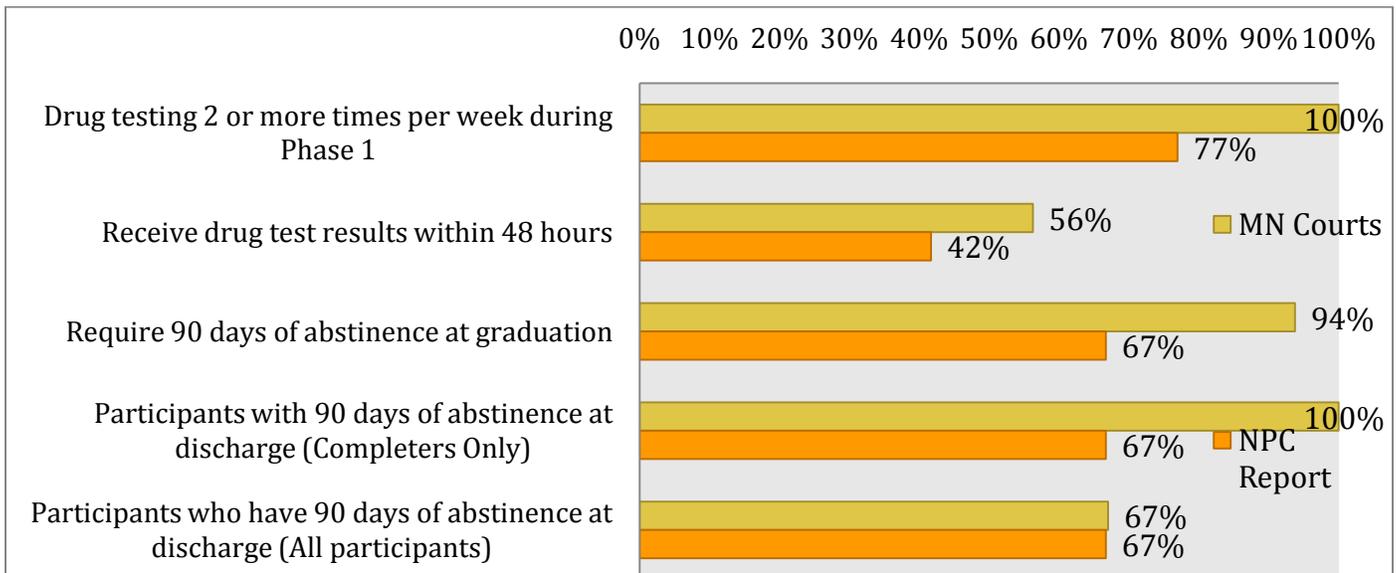
### Research Question: Is abstinence monitored by frequent alcohol and drug testing?

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcome Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Drug testing 2 or more times per week during Phase 1	-9%	33%
Receive drug test results within 48 hours	10%	33%
Require 90 days of abstinence at graduation	13%	36%
Participants with 90 days of abstinence at discharge (Completers Only)	13%	36%
Participants who have 90 days of abstinence at discharge (All participants)	13%	36%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- **All Minnesota Drug Courts require** participants to be drug tested at least twice per week during Phase 1, as compared to three quarters of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, **not using this practice will actually increase costs**, instead of decrease them.
- Over half of Minnesota Drug Courts receive drug test results within 48 hours, as compared to less than half of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 3 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts receiving results in more than 48 hours.
- Almost all (94%) Minnesota Drug Courts require 90 days of sobriety at graduation, as compared to two-thirds of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 3 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts not requiring 90 days of sobriety.
  - Actual practices were also analyzed. All Completers had at least 90 days of sobriety at discharge, & two-thirds of non-completers with 90 days of sobriety at discharge.



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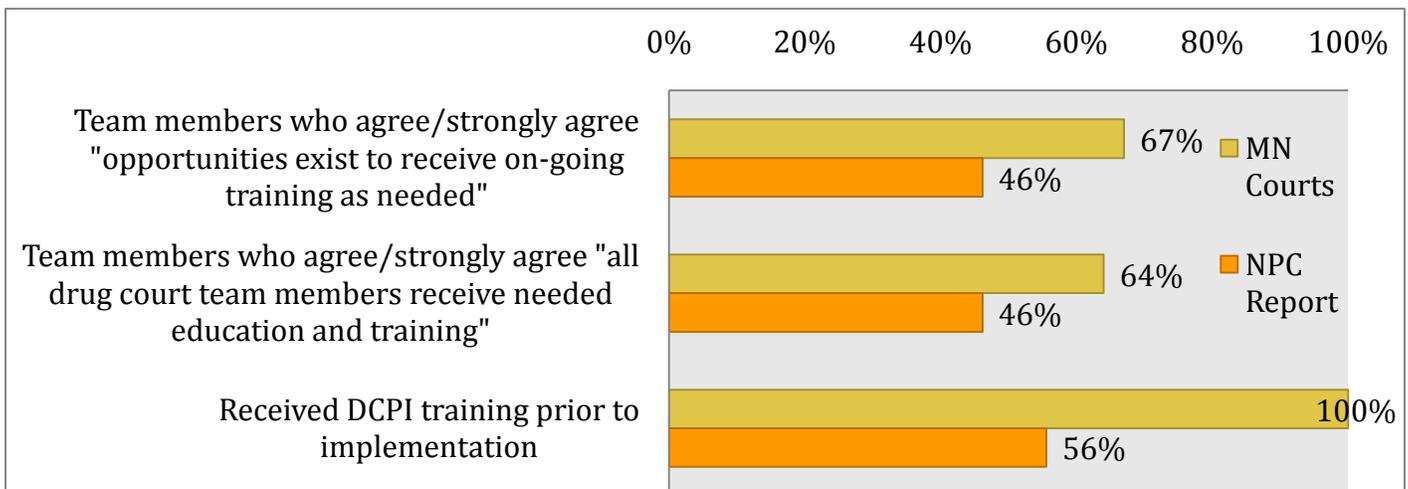
### Research Question: Do drug court team members receive continuing interdisciplinary education?

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcomes Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Team members who agree/strongly agree "opportunities exist to receive on-going training as needed"	8%	41%
Team members who agree/strongly agree "all drug court team members receive needed education and training"	8%	41%
Received DCPI training prior to implementation	2%	29%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- Two-thirds of team members on Minnesota Drug Courts agree or strongly agree with the statement "opportunities exist to receive on-going training as needed", as compared to less than half of the courts included in the NPC study that had formal training for all members. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 5 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts who do not receive formal training.
- Almost two-thirds of team members on Minnesota Drug Courts agree or strongly agree with the statement "all drug court team members receive needed education and training", as compared to less than half of the courts included in the NPC study that had formal training for all members. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 5 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts who do not receive formal training.
- All Minnesota Drug Courts received DCPI (Drug Court Planning Initiative) training prior to implementation, as compared to half of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 15 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts who did not receive this training prior to implementation.



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**Research Question: Do drug courts evaluate their effectiveness and use data to make modifications?**

- NPC Research found the following Improvement in Outcome Costs for the following Evidence Based Practices.

Evidence-Based Practice	% Improvement in Outcome Costs for Drug Courts (From NPC Report)	
	Not Using Practice	Using Practice
Evaluate effectiveness by completing process and/or outcome evaluations	11%	44%
Implemented modifications based on descriptive participant data or evaluation recommendations	11%	44%

### How Do Minnesota Drug Courts Compare to the Courts in the NPC Study?

- Three quarters of Minnesota Drug Courts have conducted a process or outcome evaluation, as compared to less than half (40%) of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 4 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts who have not completed an evaluation.
- Less than half of the Minnesota Drug Courts implemented changes in their courts based on descriptive participant data or evaluation recommendations, as compared to less than half (40%) of the courts included in the NPC study. According to the NPC study, these courts **may see up to 4 times greater savings in Outcome Costs** than courts who have implemented changes based on participant data or evaluation recommendations.

