**District Attorney’s Office to Add Prosecutors to DWI Courts**

*A record number of defendants graduate from intensive and unique program as Harris County SOBER Court expands*

Today District Attorney Devon Anderson congratulates the 37 graduates of the Harris County SOBER (Saving Ourselves By Education & Recovery) Court. SOBER Court is a specialty court program that provides DWI offenders with comprehensive alcohol treatment, intense supervision and full accountability in lieu of jail time.

SOBER Court is a cooperative program between the District Attorney’s Office, the Harris County Criminal Courts at Law, defense attorneys, the Community Supervision and Corrections Department and the Harris County Sheriff’s Department. The court is an alternative punishment option for deserving drunk driving offenders and is designed to increase public safety and reduce recidivism. Defendants are provided treatment and counseling for 3 months or more. The program also reduces long-term costs to the criminal justice system and the community.

Today, the Harris County Criminal Courts at Law will announce the expansion of SOBER Court.

“The Sober Court expansion is supported by our office. Our county has a huge problem with intoxicated drivers and providing alcohol treatment through a program like this reduces crime and saves lives,” said DA Devon Anderson. “Our office will have additional prosecutors volunteering their time to help participants achieve their sobriety goals.”

Currently, the Harris County SOBER Court has 90 defendants. All the defendants must meet strict criteria to qualify to enter the program starting with a guilty plea. Offenders receive an individualized treatment plan, including education, outpatient substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment and support groups. The 37 defendants who are graduating today are sober and have completed 12 months of the highly supervised and comprehensive alcohol treatment.

More than 185 people have graduated from SOBER Court since the program started in 2008. The graduation ceremony is scheduled to begin at 1p.m. and will take place in room number 208 on the second floor of 301 Fannin. There will be a news conference about the expansion at 12:30p.m.

**NOTE:** Cameras will be allowed in the courtroom. Interviews with the graduates will be arranged after the ceremony.