

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELING PROGRAM OWNER PLEADS GUILTY TO PREPARING FALSE EVIDENCE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Mark Charles Crout, owner of a domestic violence counseling provider Tri-County Counseling Services, pleaded guilty to three felony counts of preparing false evidence. Crout, age 56, admitted to preparing false progress reports certifying that three different probationers had attended their domestic violence counseling classes without absence, when the men had in fact missed multiple classes.

Crout was a county-approved provider of court-mandated domestic violence counseling classes for individuals convicted of crimes against a spouse, cohabitant, dating partner, or someone with whom they once had a romantic relationship. Between the end of September 2016 and May 2017, Crout allowed certain probationers who had paid off their course fees in full to “check in” to their domestic violence counseling classes by sending him a text message, rather than actually making them attend the classes in person. Crout would then either provide progress reports to the Monterey County Probation Department or give them to the probationer to file in court showing that they had been attending all of their classes, while knowing those statements to be false.

Crout’s conduct was first discovered when Monterey County Probation Department compared GPS records from a probationer’s ankle-monitoring device to the progress report of classes that Crout said the man had attended. They discovered that the probationer’s GPS device was nowhere near Crout’s office on eight days that Crout said the probationer had attended his classes. Subsequent investigation revealed at least four other probationers who admitted to receiving credit for classes they did not attend.

Crout will be sentenced to three years of formal felony probation. He does not yet have a sentencing date.

The case was investigated by District Attorney Investigator Oliver Minnig and Deputy Probation Officers Tiffany Falahati, Nancy Hatton and Alex Argueta.