

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



## ALLEGAN COUNTY PROBATE COURT



*Hon. Michael L. Buck*  
*Chief Probate Judge*

*Avery D. Rose*  
*Probate Court Register/Administrator*

## **Probate Court Authority**

Article VI Section 15 of the Michigan Constitution provides that “the jurisdiction, powers and duties of the probate court and of the judges thereof shall be provided by law.” Through the promulgation of the Estates and Protected Individuals Code (EPIC), the Mental Health Code, and other Acts, the legislature has conferred jurisdiction to the Probate Court over:

- Decedent Estate Proceedings
- Civil Actions
- Trust Proceedings
- Minor Guardianship Proceedings
- Guardianships of Incapacitated Individuals
- Protective Orders
- Conservatorships
- Guardianships of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities
- Involuntary Commitments of Mentally Ill Persons
- Drain Appeals

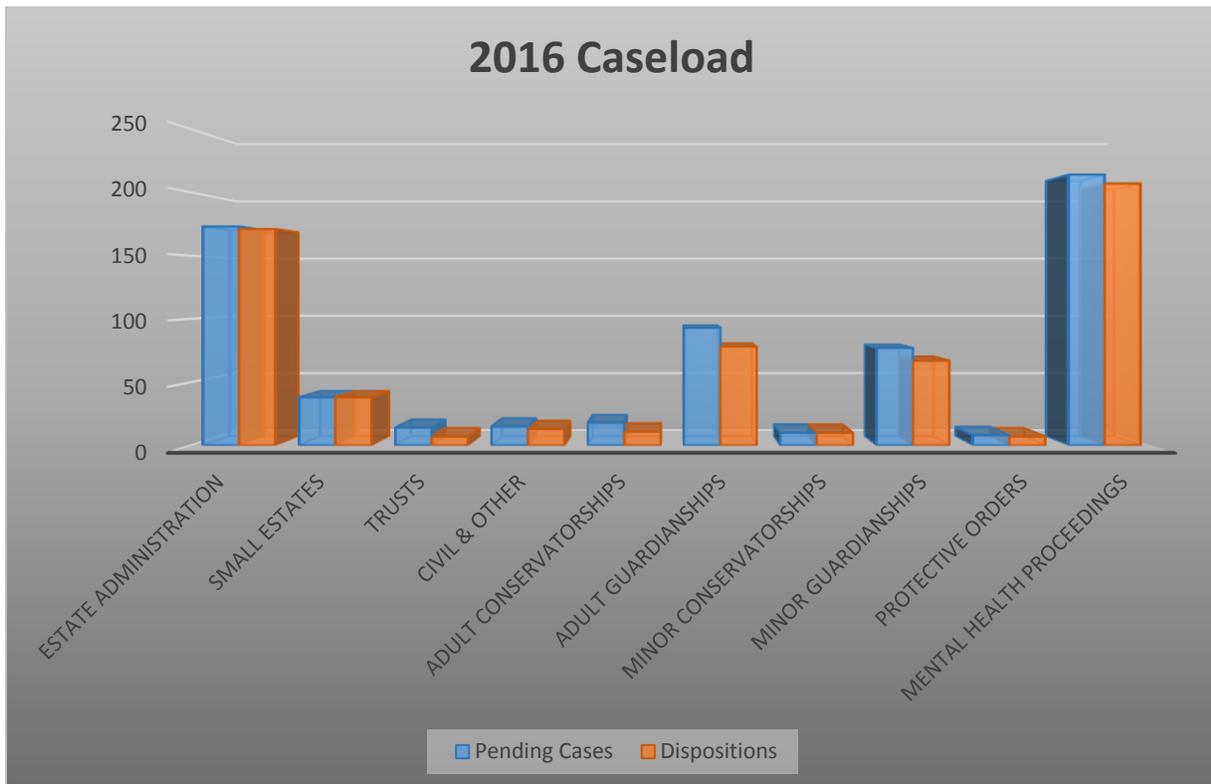
## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Allegan County Probate Court is to administer justice with fairness, equality, and integrity, to resolve matters before the court in a timely manner, and to provide courteous and prompt service in a manner that inspires trust and confidence.

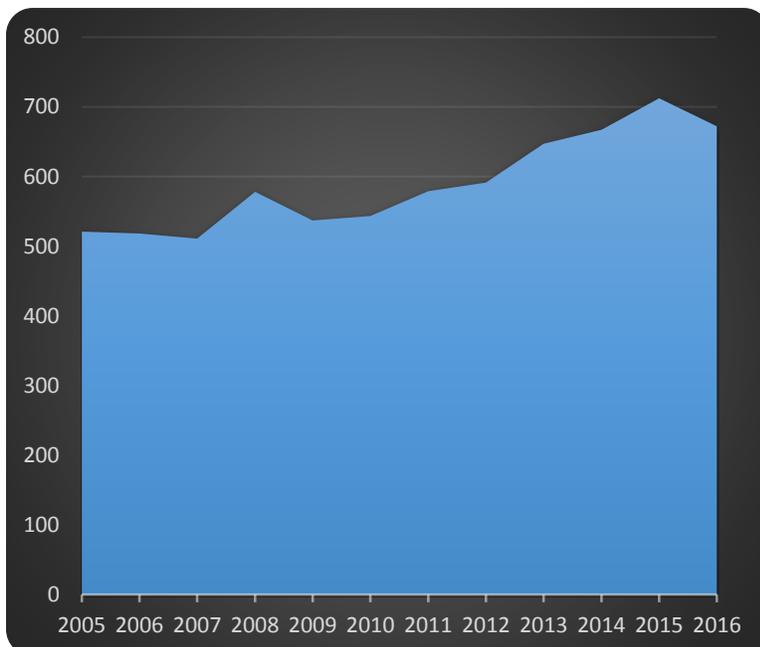
## **Goals**

- To process all matters within the time guidelines set by the State Court Administrator’s Office
- To ensure the compliance of Court-appointed fiduciaries with statutes and courts rules, in order to safeguard protected individuals and their property
- To efficiently process and adjudicate all matters before the Court
- To provide excellent customer service to all those with business before the Court

## Probate Court Caseload



In 2016 there were a total of 598 new filings in the Probate Court, the majority of which were comprised of decedents' estates (165), mental health proceedings (197), adult guardianships (83), minor guardianships (66), and small estates (36).

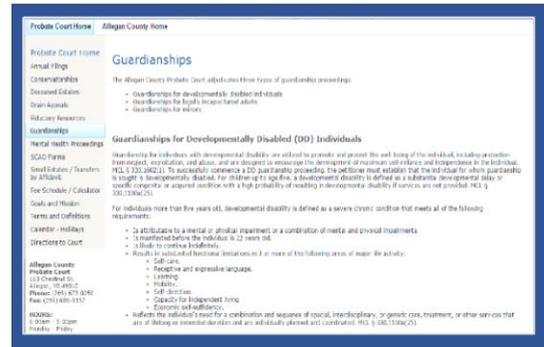


## Caseload Trends

Overall, the Court has witnessed an increase in the number of new filings it receives each year. There were 521 pending cases in 2005 and 672 in 2016. Most notably, since 2011, new mental health filings increased by 42%, and adult guardianships increased by 25%. Overall, there has been a 13.8% increase in new filings over the past six years. During that same period, the Court has maintained an outstanding average disposition rate of 98%.

## Website Improvements

Probate Court renovated its webpage in 2016, adding new content for decedent estates, guardianships, conservatorships, small estates and drain appeals, and the Court continues to provide new updates and information to benefit litigants. Since its redesign, the Court's webpage has been regularly receiving more than 300 hits per month.



## Public Satisfaction

Each year the Probate Court distributes a public satisfaction survey developed by the State Court Administrative Office. The survey assists the Court in identifying its strengths, providing positive feedback to employees, and targeting areas for improvement.



In 2016, 91% of court users felt that they were treated with courtesy and respect by court staff. Court users also indicated that the Probate Court was accessible, timely and fair. The results of the survey, notes from the public and other feedback indicate that the Probate Court continues to maintain high levels of public satisfaction.

Below are a few comments the Court received from members of the public in the 2016 public satisfaction survey:

*“Judge Buck is an excellent judge.”*  
– Litigant

*“The people I worked with were very, very helpful. I finished a lot of paperwork today. Without them I wouldn’t have been able to.”*  
– Family/friend of party to case

*“All of our questions were answered and we went away very satisfied.”*  
– Guardian

## Current Information and Key Contacts

### **Allegan County Probate Court**

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