

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

March 5, 2021



National

[The 'other' epidemic: Amid Covid-19, addiction experts fear Biden could back-burner the overdose crisis](#)

Statnews

According to interviews with leading doctors, lobbyists, members of Congress, and multiple Biden administration aides, proposed reforms include billions of new dollars for treatment and recovery services, a deregulation of addiction treatment medications, making many of 2020's emergency telehealth allowances permanent, and scaling up harm-reduction offerings like needle exchanges, fentanyl test strips, and naloxone distribution.

But over a month into Biden's presidency, it's not clear when, or even if, a major push on addiction treatment will happen. Even if one does, it's an open question whether it will lead to modest changes or the more radical approach some advocates say the crisis deserves.

"People think we have to get from New York to Los Angeles," said Andrew Kessler, a Washington consultant and behavioral health expert, describing the effort necessary to curb addiction, overdoses, and deaths. "In fact, we have to get from New York to Pluto. A billion here and a billion there ain't gonna cut it anymore. We're really far away from having the resources we need."

Overdose death counts are worse than ever: More than 86,000 for the 12-month period ending in July.

California

[Marin drug court gets \\$500K to aid defendants](#)

Marin Independent Journal

A new \$500,000 grant from the federal Bureau of Justice Assistance will enable Marin County to provide additional assistance to defendants in drug court.

The three-year grant will help pay for additional beds in sober living environments and a part-time recovery coach to connect participants with other services.

"For drug court clients, housing has been a major concern," said Marlon Washington, Marin County's chief probation officer. "A lot of participants need the support of a sober living environment. The structure and support is crucial to their sobriety. These funds will go towards supporting that."

Rochelle Ereman, a Marin County epidemiologist, said the number of suspected opioid overdoses in the county increased from 207 in 2019 to 243 in 2020.

New Jersey

[Morris County Sees Continued Surge in Opiate Overdoses](#)

Patch

The disturbing trend of overdose increases over the course of 2020 has extended into 2021 and Morris County officials are sounding the alarm.

“New Jersey’s opiate epidemic has grown more complicated and deadly with the onset of the COVID-19 emergency. Recent overdoses are being fueled by a more potent form of fentanyl circulating in North Jersey,” Morris County law enforcement and recovery partners said in a statement.

The Morris County Prosecutor’s Office has launched several programs providing alternatives to incarceration for certain drug offenses and to build a rapport between law enforcement and the community. This would include Drug Court and Operation Helping Hand (OHH), officials noted.

