

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

May 28, 2021



National

[Opioid Trial in West Virginia Comes Amid a National Reckoning for Big Pharma](#)

NPR

During years when the prescription opioid epidemic was spiraling out of control, corporate executives at the drug wholesaler McKesson sent at least two memos ordering employees to “refrain from using the word ‘suspicious’” to describe escalating opioid orders from pharmacy chains.

The documents were disclosed this week as part of a landmark federal opioid trial now underway in West Virginia, one of the states hit hardest by opioid deaths.

The case focuses on claims by local officials in Cabell County and the city of Huntington. They say their community of roughly 90,000 residents was devastated by tens of millions of prescription opioid pills shipped to local pharmacies.

The trial’s outcome is expected to establish whether drug distributors AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, and McKesson face liability nationwide for their alleged failure to curb the flow of prescription painkillers that were allegedly later abused.

National

[Treating opioid addiction: Manchin teams up on LifeBOAT Act to combat substance abuse](#)

Union Leader

Putting a 1 cent fee on every milligram of active opioid in prescription pain pills is the goal of a bill that would fund drug prevention and treatment programs addressing the nation’s drug abuse epidemic and rising numbers of overdose deaths....

This bill would establish a stewardship fee to fund efforts to provide and expand access to substance use treatment through the existing Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant. To pay for this treatment, this bill would establish a 1 cent stewardship fee on each milligram of active opioid ingredient in a prescription pain pill. The bill includes a rebate for cancer-related pain and hospice patients and an exemption for opioids used as part of medically-assisted treatment.

Arizona

[How nonprofit leaders pushed through pandemic to do the most good](#)

AZBigMedia

The opioid crisis did not take a break during the pandemic. We have been actively collaborating with City of Phoenix municipal judges and other providers in a Medication-Assisted Treatment pilot program to offer a “whole-patient” approach to treating substance use disorders. Mental health services remain critically important in our communities, and SB&H is proud to be a part of this much-needed support system.

Louisiana

[Louisiana House gives final passage to Drug Court measure](#)

WGNO

More than a year after creating the Drug and Specialty Court Commission, the Louisiana Legislature has given final passage to SB 145 by Senator Rick Ward – a bill that expands and improves drug and specialty courts across the State.

As Chairman of the Drug and Specialty Courts Commission, Attorney General Jeff Landry applauded the Legislature and its dedication to true criminal justice reform.

“In an overwhelming, bipartisan manner – the Louisiana House of Representatives voted to repair the damage caused by the opioid epidemic and to improve the safety of all our State’s citizens,” said Attorney General Landry. “This bipartisan criminal justice reform will help reduce crime, reduce recidivism, and reduce drug abuse while making our communities safer and saving our hard-earned tax dollars.”