



Opioids and the Courts News: Nov. 7, 2017

National

[Editorial: How to reduce the deadly toll of opioids](#)

Chicago Tribune

One sensible proposal: increasing the use of drug courts, which divert some addicts into treatment instead of punishment. These have shown value in getting offenders to stay out of trouble and work at legitimate jobs. But 44 percent of U.S. counties lack an adult drug court. The commission urged that the Justice Department push states to make them universal.

National

[Law360's Pro Say: Can Courts Curb The Opioid Crisis?](#)

Law360

On the latest episode of Law360's Pro Say podcast, the team discusses cases relating to the opioid crisis hitting the courts; special counsel Robert Mueller's view of attorney-client privilege; a federal judge blocking the transgender military ban; and a New Jersey judge who was accused of fits of rage.

Each week on [Pro Say](#), Law360 staffers Amber McKinney, Bill Donahue and Alex Lawson bring you inside the newsroom and break down what you need to know about key legal developments.

National

[One of Trump's first major solutions to the opioid crisis could actually make the problem worse](#)

Business Insider

Drug courts have come under scrutiny by public health experts who say that incorporating the criminal justice system into treatment for a disease such as opioid-use disorder is harmful and can often result in punishing participants by sending them to prison if they relapse, as most people addicted to opioids do.

National

[Opioid commission: We need drug courts, not prisons, for abusers](#)

CNN

The President's opioid commission on Wednesday recommended nationwide drug courts to help place substance abusers into treatment rather than sending them into the prison system.



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[Trump opioid commission backs more drug courts, media blitz](#)

The Hill

President Trump's opioid commission laid out 56 recommendations for how the nation should combat the epidemic, including drug courts and a national media campaign, days after the crisis was declared a national public health emergency.

National

[Trump opioid panel wants drug courts, training for doctors](#)

Associated Press

President Donald Trump's commission on the opioid crisis called Wednesday for more drug courts, more training for doctors and penalties for insurers that dodge covering addiction treatment.

National

[Trump's Opioid Panel Wants More Treatment Options and Drug Courts](#)

Reuters

Still, Dr. Stefan Kertesz of the University of Alabama at Birmingham said communities often lack treatment facilities where drug courts can send addicts. And many drug courts charge fees that make them unaffordable for many.

"Drug courts often function as pay to play," Kertesz said. "Only people who can come up with money can escape a prison sentence."

Delaware

[In Response To Area's Opioid Epidemic](#)

Greater Wilmington Business Journal

Members of the Brunswick County Opioid Task Force know law enforcement actions alone can't stop the addiction epidemic from taking lives and destroying families and communities.

That's why Brunswick County Sheriff John Ingram and Superior Resident Court Judge Ola Lewis established the task force last year with parents who have lost children to addiction, health care providers and treatment center representatives. The members have seen firsthand that rural counties like Brunswick lack treatment options and other resources that can inhibit the fight against addiction and the crime and loss of life it brings with it.



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Georgia

[A glimpse at the local opioid issue](#)

The Union-Recorder (Milledgeville)

Judge Philip B. Spivey is a longtime juvenile court judge in the Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit in Georgia's eighth judicial district. In addition to his duties determining custody and adjudicating delinquency cases, or crimes committed by minors who are not being tried as adults, Spivey also oversees the Baldwin County Family Dependency Treatment Court. The court works in conjunction with a specialized program that re-grants parents custody of their children upon completion of a parole-like drug treatment program, and Spivey said the program has already helped many parents in the Ocmulgee Circuit kick their drug habits using their children as motivation.

“The Family Treatment Court is a program that I’ve been running over four years now,” he said. “It’s an intensive outpatient program that combines evidence-based programming with interviewing with the judge every two weeks. It’s very intensive — we have surveillance officers that go into the home, and we also try to make sure that the parenting is taken care of, and we work with DFACS [the Department of Family and Child Services] in that regard.”

Kansas

[Schmidt: Opioid addiction epidemic 'coming our way'](#)

Topeka Capital Journal

An opioid addiction and overdose epidemic that has ravaged many states could worsen in Kansas, said Attorney General Derek Schmidt.

Rep. Greg Lakin, R-Wichita, who is a family and addiction physician, said he thought more could be done to address the problem. Lakin said he would like to see a comprehensive round-table approach that includes physicians, police and court officials.

New York

[Fentanyl, heroin and painkillers prompt surge in opioid deaths in New York](#)

The Journal News

The commission called for 56 specific policy changes that included creating more drug courts, improving access to treatment and training health-care providers on responsible opioid prescribing.



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New York

[Opioid Court judge opens up about personal battle with addiction](#)

wivb.com

Like the men and women who approach his bench, Judge Hannah is an addict. Hannah, who's addicted to cocaine, has been sober for 18 years. He's careful not to be overconfident, something he teaches his defendants. "If you think you're bigger than this, that's when it comes back and hits you like a sledgehammer.

Virginia

[Opioid summit to be held this month in Abingdon](#)

Bristol Herald Courier

In addition, Meade said panel discussions will include juvenile drug courts and an employable work force.

Wisconsin

[Opioid prescriptions drop in Wisconsin](#)

Wisconsin Public Radio

As the opioid epidemic worsens, members of [Gov. Scott Walker's Task Force on Opioid Abuse](#) wonder whether the medical community is responding to the crisis quickly enough.

Circuit Court Judge William Domina is one of those task force members.

As a judge overseeing a drug court in Waukesha County, Domina hears about children born addicted to opioids and their parents dying of drug overdoses. And nearby Milwaukee County is on track to have 500 overdose deaths this year, a figure he calls "shocking."

"We don't have time. There's an old saying in the legal system: bad facts make bad law. And we have horrific facts that are happening not just in Wisconsin but in this country," Domina said Friday at a meeting of the task force. "There is inordinate pressure and it's going to result I think, in Draconian policy proposals which may be unfair but are predictable. So if the medical community wants to avoid those, they have to accept they are a prime participant," said Domina.