

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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Indiana

[‘They’re dying’: Edinburg community takes action to prevent opioid overdose deaths](#)

Daily Journal

Though [resident Misty Hogan] had been dabbling in drugs before his death, by the year following the trauma, she was spiraling into depression and tried meth. For six years, she was hooked. In 2018, she was sent to prison for possession, and during her sentence, participated in Recovery While Incarcerated, a program of the Indiana Department of Correction.

The program helped her turn her life around, and led to her release into Johnson County’s reentry court, which provides resources such as rehabilitation and treatment services, drug screenings, and housing and employment assistance to help people who have been in jail to stay out of jail.

Hogan completed the two-year program earlier this year, and had become a tireless advocate helping others escape addiction. She now works as an intake coordinator for Cardinal Recovery in Greenwood.

Kansas

[Addiction derailed their lives. These Kansans say the criminal justice system made it worse](#)

KCUR

Kansas had 2,392 drug probation sentences in 2013. That number increased every year between 2013 and 2019 and peaked at 3,939 drug probation sentences, according to data from the Kansas sentencing commission. A majority of those sentences, above 70%, were for possession.

The number suddenly dropped in 2020, though addiction counselors, judges and attorneys say the situation has not improved. One addiction specialist said, “these last two years have been the worst I’ve ever seen.”

More probation sentences mean more Kansans with addiction are going through the court system. A person could take multiple paths when they are first arrested on a drug charge, but what happens next depends on the person and the circumstances of their case — and which county they happen to get arrested in or the particular judge they face.

Shawnee County District Attorney Mike Kagay said a handful of judges hear cases like that in his county and each one may take a different approach. That response can vary county by county and no one clear outcome exists for people caught with drugs. But Kagay said he doesn't want to send people to prison.

Michigan

[Distraught parents keep calling Lincoln Park Judge Greg Clifton](#)

Detroit Free Press

The saddest thing about the phone calls is that they keep coming.

Distraught parents reach out through tears to tell Lincoln Park Judge Greg Clifton their sons and daughters are losing themselves in drugs or that they've been killed by an overdose, and he does what he can, though on occasion he, too, cries, heartbroken by stolen potential and for the families left behind.

“I called my aunt, I called my brother,” Kuykendall [parent of deceased] said. “But making the call to (Clifton), that killed me. That broke my heart because he cared so much. ... Anytime I called, texted him, he took the time to text me back and called me. He was there every time I asked for help.”

They sat together at the funeral home. The judge, she said, “was family.”

That's why the phone calls keep coming.

Oregon

[Judge looking for drug team: Bachart says needed for fentanyl response](#)

Newport News Times

The presiding judge of Lincoln County Circuit Court is appealing to municipal governments to participate in an interagency drug enforcement team to combat a crisis of opioid overdoses.

“I'm here because, in 25 years, I will say this is the worst thing I've seen hit our community,” Judge Sheryl Bachart told the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners during its regular meeting April 20, two days after she made a similar presentation to Newport City Council.

The county's senior judge also presides over Lincoln County specialty courts — diversionary or deferred prosecution programs that involve a level of verified treatment participation, which allow compliant participants to avoid conviction or prison time — and thus, regularly interacts with people with substance abuse disorder and treatment professionals within the criminal justice system.