

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

November 19, 2021



National

[Provisional Drug Overdose Death Counts, 2021](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

12 Month-ending Provisional Number of Drug Overdose Deaths

Figure 1a. 12 Month-ending Provisional Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths: United States

Figure 1b. Percent Change in Predicted 12 Month-ending Count of Drug Overdose Deaths, by Jurisdiction: April 2020 to April 2021

National

[U.S. drug overdose deaths increase nearly 30% during COVID-19 pandemic](#)

WYSO

Drug overdose deaths in the U.S. spiked nearly 30 percent during the pandemic and reached the highest level ever recorded, according to [data](#) released Wednesday from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

During the 12-month period between April 2020 and April 2021, more than 100,000 people died from drug overdoses — a 28.5 percent increase compared to the previous year.

Kentucky saw the highest increase in overdose deaths of any Midwestern state at nearly 55 percent. Indiana had the third-highest increase in the Midwest, with a 32 percent jump in fatal overdose deaths.

National

[States Get Road Map for Easing Access to Opioid Reversal Drug](#)

Bloomberg Law

The White House on Wednesday provided states with a legislative road map for removing barriers to an opioid overdose reversal drug.



The [model law](#), released by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, offers legal provisions that states could enact to ease access to the drug naloxone. The move comes amid the Biden administration's increasing efforts to combat the nation's addiction crisis.

"Naloxone is one of the most effective tools we have to save lives. But sadly, today, people with substance use disorders are overdosing and dying across the country because naloxone access depends a great deal on where you live," ONDCP Director Rahul Gupta said in a statement.

National

[Expanding treatment for the opioids crisis is critical to saving lives, but isn't enough](#)

The Hill

Drug overdose deaths have soared during the COVID-19 pandemic, with an [estimated 99,106 in the 12-months ending March 2021](#). Strong evidence shows medication is effective in treating opioid use disorder (OUD) and [reducing overdose deaths](#). Scaling up medication treatment up in U.S. communities could [reduce overdose deaths by 40 percent](#).

Yet in a recent study funded by the [Bloomberg Overdose Initiative](#), we found that medication treatment for OUD is in critically short supply across the United States. In [our new study of county-level opioid use disorder treatment needs and capacity](#) in six states and Washington, D.C., — which was supported through funding from Bloomberg Philanthropies — we found the need for treatment far outpaces availability. In fact, even if the treatment capacity were doubled in counties we examined, it would only meet 7 to 28 percent of the need.

Maryland

[Maryland substance abuse experts say more access to treatment and medications is essential to combatting opioid crisis](#)

Baltimore Sun

A day after federal researchers released troubling new statistics related to the state of the U.S. opioid epidemic, Maryland doctors and substance use disorder specialists said more widespread access to treatment centers, health care services, and lifesaving medications are key to stem the increase in overdose fatalities.

From April 2020 to April 2021, overdose deaths rose 21% in Maryland, according to the latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and by more than 28% nationwide. More than 100,000 people died due to overdoses in that time period, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, a record number that is higher than the number of people who died of gunshots and car crashes combined.

The CDC estimates that more than 2,800 Marylanders are included in the national tally, acknowledging that the numbers may be underreported due to incomplete data. That's up from close to 2,300 overdose deaths the year prior.

Texas

[The Cost of 'Pill Culture' and the Opioid Epidemic in Dallas County](#)

D Magazine

Dallas County, which outside of its direct payment will be able to access millions of settlement dollars in a regional fund, intends to spend that money on fighting the epidemic itself. "Hopefully that fund will just get bigger and bigger and we can fund opioid divert courts, drug courts," [JoDee Neil, attorney with Simon Greenstone Panatier] says. "Maybe additional equipment and investigators for the medical examiner. Obviously we need tons of rescue drugs and a whole lot of education."

Vermont

[Overdose deaths in Vermont soared by 70% amid COVID. It's the highest increase in the U.S.](#)

Burlington Free Press

Vermont, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's findings, had the highest percentage increase in overdose deaths during the pandemic. This week, the CDC released provisional data on overdose deaths in the United States.

Nationwide, overdose deaths for the 12-month [period] ending April 2021 were 27.2% higher than in the previous 12 months. In the same period, Vermont's overdose deaths went up by nearly 70% from 123 deaths to 209.