



Opioids and the Courts News: Nov. 21, 2017

Florida

[As opioid crisis continues, local judge says no more plea agreements for dealers](#)

St. Augustine Record

With the nation, state and county reeling from the ongoing opioid epidemic, a local circuit judge says he will no longer accept plea deals in cases against people accused of selling the powerful drugs that include heroin and fentanyl.

"I just keep hearing the stories from the detectives about overdose deaths," Circuit Judge Howard Maltz said Wednesday morning seated behind the desk in his chambers.

Indiana

[New Device To Assist Hoosiers Struggling With Opioids](#)

MyWabashValley

Greenwood Recovery Court was THE first in the nation to offer [the Bridge Device].

Judge Lewis Gregory, who presided over the court said "We tell people if you come to us asks us for help, you will get help."

Judge Lewis Gregory said they've offered it as an option for people put on drug-related probation, since January.

He said the device is working, pointing to 13 people who chose it.

Judge Lewis Gregory said "Reports from nearly all of them have been that the bridge is very successful in almost totally eliminating the nausea. It cuts down on the pain probably at least by half."

Kentucky

[Local circuit judge participates in judicial college](#)

The Trimble Banner

Circuit Court Judge Karen Conrad, who serves Trimble, Henry and Oldham counties, participated in sessions on racial fairness in jury selection, eyewitness testimony and the opioid epidemic at the 2017 Circuit Judges College that took place Oct. 22-25 in Louisville. The Education Committee of the Kentucky Circuit Judges Association and the Office of Judicial Branch Education at the Administrative Office of the Courts developed the college.



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Massachusetts

[STATE HOUSE ROUNDUP -- Around the turn they come](#)

MetroWest Daily News

The retooled proposal would instead allow medical clinicians to have patients involuntary transferred to treatment centers, instead of kept in emergency rooms, for up to 72 hours if they are considered a threat to themselves or others. After 72 hours, medical personnel would be able to petition the courts to keep the patient longer.

Michigan

[Drug court: Holistic approach to opioid epidemic](#)

Times Herald (Port Huron)

As the opioid epidemic continues to rise in St. Clair County with an increased number of overdose calls to first responders, more drug-related crimes cycling through the courts and a national designation as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area by the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, officials say more resources are needed. One option that has proved effective in neighboring counties, such as Macomb, are drug treatment courts.

“It’s not an experiment anymore,” said Chris Deutsch, National Association of Drug Court Professionals communications director. “We know (treatment courts) work, they reduce drug use, crime and recidivism and saves the community money.”

Michigan

[Editorial: County taxpayers deserve a drug court](#)

Port Huron Times Herald

The nagging irony holding up a county drug court is that things like that don’t exist here. Like most smaller communities and rural areas across the country, the need for drug treatment programs hasn’t caught up with the epidemic of opioid addiction. We don’t have enough in-patient care and struggle to provide follow-up care.

And it is far worse in rural areas. That is, in part, because too many of us believe the needs of those addicted to drugs are separate from our needs. Smaller towns in the Blue Water Area have blocked treatment facilities. Port Huron, in trying to balance compassion with concern for neighbors, made it more difficult for recovery homes to open and operate in the city.



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New York

[Rockland drug court grads take 'hard way' out of addiction](#)

The Journal News

The two are among the nine people who make up the largest graduating class from the program since it was expanded by the county in 2012 to include drug-related arrests for non-violent, misdemeanor crimes.

The majority of the class is made up of young men and women, a demographic that has been hit heavily by the prescription pain pills and heroin epidemic that has been unfolding across the country over the last several years.

North Carolina

[Alamance judge appointed to state opioid-sentencing task force](#)

Times-News (Burlington)

Alamance County District Court Judge Steve Messick has been appointed to a state task force aimed at reducing sentences in opioid cases.

The state Legislature's Synthetic Opioid and Other Dangerous Drug Control Act, passed last spring, created the Task Force on Sentencing Reforms for Opioid Drug Convictions to review the cases of individual inmates in prison solely for opioid offenses requiring prison time under the state's structured-sentencing rules, and to consider how to determine which could be successfully reintegrated into society, and to consider modifications to existing laws.

Pennsylvania

[Allegheny County grapples with parents on opioids](#)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Every Friday afternoon, Pittsburgh Municipal Court hears family crimes, its plastic seats filling up largely with parents accused of endangering their children by injecting themselves with heroin or fentanyl.

Often the district judge tells the parent to leave the kids in the hands of a relative, get drug treatment and come back to court in a few months. Occasionally, the judge adds some grim parting advice:

"If you decide to relapse," District Judge Anthony Ceoffe urged one young woman last month, "stay away from the kids."



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Wisconsin

[Is prison the best place for drug offenders?](#)

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

The county's drug treatment court recently received a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which will allow the 5-year-old program to increase its capacity by an additional 10 slots, said Waukesha County Criminal Justice Collaborating Council Coordinator Rebecca Luczaj.

The grant is for three years and will provide a total of \$914,022.

Wisconsin

[Marathon County to create drug court to combat opioid crisis](#)

Wausau Daily Herald

There will be a new drug court in Marathon County. It's part of a larger effort to combat the opioid epidemic.

The program is part of the 2018 budget passed Thursday by the Marathon County Board that declares a financial crisis as opioids continue to grip the county and its resources. The budget dedicates about \$1.6 million from the county's reserves to cover costs associated with the epidemic.

One major change will be the creation of the drug court, which is funded by the county and state. These courts aim to break the cycle of drug abuse by providing treatment and rehabilitation services to offenders. The county will also add an information specialist to the district attorney's office and a new deputy sheriff who specializes in mental health, addiction and homelessness.

Wisconsin

[State of the Judiciary: Chief Justice Highlights Court Efforts on Opioid Crisis](#)

WisBar

Wisconsin courts are responding. "As the opioid crisis has hit Wisconsin, our courts have risen to the challenge – not just in regard to handling the crimes that often follow such addictions, but also in regard to significant efforts to turn around the lives of those who have become addicted," Chief Justice Roggensack said.

She noted the Brown County Heroin Treatment Court, created through the efforts of Judge Thomas Walsh. Judge Walsh wrote about the Brown County Heroin Treatment Court in *Wisconsin Lawyer*TM. His article, "[In the Crosshairs: Heroin's Impact on Wisconsin's Criminal Justice System](#)," received the *Wisconsin Lawyer*'s highest award.



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Chief Justice Roggensack also noted other court efforts around the state, including the Milwaukee County Circuit Court's Family Drug Treatment Court. It operates in children's court, which assists the children of addicted parents.

Wisconsin

[State of the Judiciary: 2017 Address](#)

Chief Justice Patience Drake Roggensack

The Opioid Crisis

The opioid crisis in Wisconsin fits that last category. The scourge of opioid addiction cuts across all races and economic levels. Opioid addiction does not discriminate based on marital status or gender.

Opioid addiction clogs our courts as we address law violations for which addiction is a contributing factor. It cripples our families when parents become addicted and no longer provide a stable and safe home for their children. It also shatters families when children become addicted and parents try and try to help them overcome the problems that accompany addiction.

...

As the opioid crisis has hit Wisconsin, our courts have risen to the challenge – not just in regard to handling the crimes that often follow such addictions, but also in regard to significant efforts to turn around the lives of those who have become addicted. For example, Brown County, through the efforts of Judge Thomas Walsh and the assistance of TAD funding, has established a rehabilitative court focused on heroin addiction. Heroin addiction differs from some of the other addictions we see because it is susceptible to medical treatments to reduce extreme withdrawal symptoms. However, as the medications themselves can be addictive, they must be carefully monitored by a physician. Judge Walsh has remarked that finding physicians willing to participate in heroin court and the funding to pay for the medications used in alleviating withdrawal from a heroin addiction is not an easy task.

Children suffer significantly when their parents are addicted as the level of trauma to which they are subjected is increased day after day. Milwaukee County, which has been very affected by heroin and other substance abuse, has begun a Family Drug Treatment Court through the efforts of Judges Mary Triggiano, Joseph Donald and Jane Carroll. The Family Drug Treatment Court is a therapeutic, specialty court that operates in Children's Court, not in adult criminal court where other drug treatment courts find their footing. The Family Drug Treatment Court works to assist children of addicted parents by intervening in families overwhelmed by drug use. Milwaukee also has secured residential treatment for pregnant women and for intravenous heroin users. Two of the women's treatment facilities focus on families and allow children to remain with their mothers during their residential stay. In addition, where appropriate, the Family Drug Treatment



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Court works with Mental Health of America to coordinate mental health and drug treatment services to the addicted parent.

The Family Drug Treatment Court is fortunate to have the support of Secretary Eloise Anderson, Department of Children and Families, who has authorized much needed funding for treatment court coordinators, without which we simply could not attack the complicated problems that addictions create for Wisconsin families. Milwaukee County also received a \$2.1 million dollar grant from SAMSHA, to be used over five years, which will assist the operation of the Family Drug Treatment Court.

Wisconsin treatment courts have had strong support from the Legislature through TAD grants. Senate Bill 390, now moving through the Legislature, continues legislative cooperation with the courts for treatment alternatives. When enacted, Senate Bill 390 will make grants available to counties and Native American Indian tribes to enable them to establish and operate evidence-based family court procedures that make use of trauma-informed decisions in family treatment court programs that address substance abuse and mental illness.