



Opioids and the Courts News: May 16, 2018

National

[Opioid epidemic leaving grandparents to raise grandchildren](#)

60 Minutes

The growing opioid crisis has been declared a public health emergency. It's sparked a parallel crisis you rarely hear about: the impact on children neglected by addicted parents. More than one million American children now live with grandparents, primarily because of their parent's [addiction to opioids](#) and other drugs: heroin, crack, meth and alcohol. Grandparents are putting off retirement and plowing through savings to rescue their grandchildren from dangerous situations.

National

[Nonopioid drug approved by FDA for opioid withdrawal symptoms](#)

CBS News

Federal regulators on Wednesday [approved the first nonopioid treatment to ease withdrawal from quitting addictive opioids](#). The U.S. Food and Drug Administration expedited approval of Lucemyra to help combat the U.S. opioid epidemic. Two-thirds of [drug overdose deaths in 2016 involved opioids](#), mostly fentanyl, heroin and prescription painkillers.

National

[At least 15 states are pushing for laws to tax opioids. Drugmakers are pushing back.](#)

Associated Press

Facing a rising death toll from drug overdoses, state lawmakers across the country are testing a strategy to boost treatment for opioid addicts: Force drug manufacturers and their distributors to pay for it.

Bills introduced in at least 15 states would impose taxes or fees on prescription painkillers. Several of the measures have bipartisan support and would funnel millions of dollars toward treatment and prevention programs.

In Montana, state Sen. Roger Webb, a Republican, sees the approach as a way to hold drugmakers accountable for an overdose epidemic that in 2016 claimed 42,000 lives in the U.S., a record.

"You're creating the problem," he said. "You're going to fix it."



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[Opioid crisis: Drug executives express regret to Congress on Tuesday, one says his company contributed to the epidemic](#)

Washington Post

Five drug-distribution executives were summoned to testify before a House Energy and Commerce Committee oversight panel Tuesday, and though Barrett said he wished he had identified the problem sooner, he stopped short of accepting responsibility for the epidemic. When Rep. Gregg Harper (R-Miss.), chairman of the panel, asked the executives whether they believe the conduct of their companies contributed to the widespread opioid problem, he and three others denied it.

National

[A Combination of Approaches Helps Local Governments Tackle the Opioid Crisis: 9 key takeaways from Philadelphia, Baltimore, Staten Island, and beyond](#)

Pew Charitable Trusts

1. Expand the use of naloxone to prevent overdose deaths.
2. Push for fewer opioid prescriptions, while maintaining effective pain management.
3. Increase access to medication-assisted treatment.
4. Reduce barriers to treatment.
5. Use contact with the criminal justice system as an opportunity for intervention.
6. Acknowledge that the impact of the problem goes far beyond the overdose death rate.
7. Government agencies must work together.
8. Safe-injection sites may have benefits but can be difficult for communities to accept.
9. Efforts need to be made to reduce the stigma of opioid dependence.

National

[Adult Drug Court Discretionary Program: Implementation and Enhancement Grants](#)

Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice

The purpose of the Adult Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program is to provide financial and technical assistance to states, state courts, local courts, units of local government, and Indian tribal governments to develop and implement drug courts that effectively integrate evidence-based substance use disorder treatment, mandatory drug testing, sanctions and incentives, and transitional services in a judicially supervised court setting with jurisdiction over substance-misusers to include addressing the opioid epidemic. BJA is accepting applications for FY 2018 grants to either establish new drug courts or enhance existing drug court programs using evidence-based principles and practices, as well as statewide level grants. BJA also supports courts that integrate the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) adult drug court standards into existing drug court services.



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Illinois

[Courts, addicts turn to Vivitrol to combat opioid epidemic amid aggressive marketing](#)

WLS-TV

The I-Team was granted special permission to recently see one of the drug court sessions in action.

Judge Marmarie Kostelny said she appreciated the manufacturer of Vivitrol marketing to judges because she never would have known about it otherwise, and could not have used it as a tool in her courtroom to help people who have serious addictions.

Critics said health professionals should make recommendations about medication, not those in criminal justice.

They welcomed Vivitrol as an option, but warned the expectations may be too high. They want those in need to know that two other treatments, suboxone and methadone, have a long track record of effectiveness and safety. They said they worry Vivitrol will be offered at the exclusion of other medications.

Ohio

[Brown praises work of drug courts in Ohio](#)

Ironton Tribune

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, took to the Senate floor Tuesday night to highlight and praise the work of drug courts in Ohio.

Brown said the courts, which are aimed at supporting those struggling with addiction, offer programs that enhance treatment, increase collaboration in the community and save taxpayers money.

“Everyone in this chamber knows how bad the opioid epidemic is,” Brown said. “In Ohio, based on the averages, 11 people will die today of a drug overdose.”

Brown said the country can not “arrest our way out of this crisis.”

Pennsylvania

[Drug courts divided on approaches to addiction recovery](#)

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The opioid epidemic has created two camps in the addiction recovery world, and some of the nation's 1,500-plus drug courts are choosing sides.



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The sometimes-competing approaches are 12-step drug abstinence programs like Narcotics Anonymous and medication-assisted treatment using methadone or buprenorphine (often known by the brand name Suboxone). Addiction experts say each approach can work for some people and that a combination also can be effective.

In the Allegheny County Drug Court, NA gets the nod, and the two medications are almost entirely forbidden to the 136 defendants.

“Suboxone, methadone, is just another addiction,” said Common Pleas Senior Judge Lester G. Nauhaus, who founded the special court and has run it for 20 years. “It doesn’t solve the problem. ... I just don’t know if there’s another answer except abstinence.”