



Opioids and the Courts News: Apr. 12, 2019

National

[Oklahoma judge rules out jury trial in opioid case against J&J, Teva](#)

Reuters

An Oklahoma judge on Thursday ruled that Johnson & Johnson and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd do not have a right to a jury trial in a lawsuit by the state's attorney general accusing the drugmakers of helping fuel the opioid epidemic.

Judge Thad Balkman in Norman, Oklahoma during a hearing also denied a request by the companies that they be tried separately rather than jointly during the bench trial set to begin on May 28 in Cleveland County District Court.

National

[Indivior Inc. Indicted for Fraudulently Marketing Prescription Opioid](#)

Department of Justice

A federal grand jury sitting in Abingdon, Virginia, has indicted Indivior Inc. (formerly known as Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals Inc.) and Indivior PLC (Indivior) for engaging in an illicit nationwide scheme to increase prescriptions of Suboxone Film, an opioid drug used in the treatment of opioid addiction, the Department of Justice announced.

According to the indictment, Indivior obtained billions of dollars in revenue from Suboxone Film prescriptions by deceiving health care providers and health care benefit programs into believing that Suboxone Film was safer, less divertible, and less abusable than other opioid-addiction treatment drugs. Indivior also is alleged to have sought to boost profits by using a "Here to Help" program to connect opioid-addicted patients to doctors the company knew were prescribing opioids at high rates and in a clinically unwarranted manner.

National

[Film Explores Rural Health Care Amid Poverty, Opioid Crisis](#)

Associated Press

Northern [New Mexico](#) is known for tourist attractions such as artsy Santa Fe, eclectic Taos and the healing dirt of El Santuario de Chimayó. The region's relaxing spas and skiing options present middle-class and wealthy visitors the opportunity to bask in the allurements of quiet and breathtaking landscapes.

But seldom do these tourists stop in the drive-by towns and villages where largely Hispanic and Native American residents make their home. And there sits another side of northern New Mexico.





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A new documentary, set to air on the PBS Independent Lens series this week, explores the world of rural health care amid poverty and a persistent opioid crisis by focusing on these northern New Mexico communities.

“The Providers” looks at the challenges three health care workers in rural New Mexico face as they give services to aging patients and those struggling with addiction to alcohol and opioids.

Illinois

[5 graduate from drug court as the state looks to crack down on opioid use](#)

WGEM

New efforts are underway to fight back against opioid and drug use in Illinois.

On Thursday, it was announced the state would receive \$15 million in federal funding to expand opioid use disorder treatment, that includes more money for the state’s prescription monitoring program.

Five people graduated from Adams County Drug Court on Thursday. Drug court requires those in it to submit to drug testing, substance abuse treatment and self-help meetings.

Kentucky

[Kentucky Court of Justice to launch RESTORE initiative to help courts](#)

North Kentucky Tribune

The Kentucky Court of Justice will kick off a new initiative to help judges, circuit court clerks, and court personnel further address Kentucky’s opioid epidemic.

The Responsive Education to Support Treatment in Opioid Recovery Efforts (RESTORE) initiative will launch with a news conference on April 11 at 1:30 p.m. EDT. The public and media are invited to attend this event which will take place in the Supreme Courtroom, State Capitol, 2nd Floor, 700 Capital Ave., Frankfort.

“The opioid epidemic has placed a severe strain on the courts, and substance use disorders have taken a toll on individuals and families throughout the commonwealth,” Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr. said. “We want to give our judges, circuit court clerks and court staff the training and resources they need to effectively handle opioid-related cases. By working together, we can make a difference for Kentuckians affected by substance use disorders.”

The Administrative Office of the Courts is carrying out the RESTORE initiative as a sub-recipient of a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The grant was awarded to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services as part of the collaborative Kentucky Opioid Response Effort.





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Kentucky

[RESTORE new tool for Kentucky courts to fight drug epidemic](#)

Kentucky Today

A new initiative to help Kentucky's court system address the opioid epidemic was announced Thursday.

Known as RESTORE, or Responsive Education to Support Treatment in Opioid Recovery Efforts, the program brings together the Judicial and Executive Branches of Government, along with community organizations such as Operation UNITE, with six outcome goals:

- Provide relevant training to the courts on opioid and substance abuse disorders.
- Reduce the stigma of opioid and substance abuse disorders.
- Effect a change in practice for court personnel.
- Promote a family-centered approach.
- Facilitate access to treatment.
- Unify efforts to combat the effects of the opioid crisis and future drug trends.

Kentucky Supreme Court Chief Justice John D. Minton, Jr., said it was important to get all the entities involved in the issue, because it is more than just a criminal justice issue.

“It crosses many barriers and lines, so it’s also a Family Court problem, where they see this on a daily basis,” he said. “Pre-trial Services, specialty courts, all play a key role in helping us carry out this initiative.”