

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

International

[Drug court – giving families a chance to break the cycle of opioid use](#)

The Guardian (UK)

There was a growing need for a small group of addicts that did not respond to treatment or programs offered by the existing court or probation, she said, so five years ago she applied for a grant to use a federal model for a drug court that had first emerged in 1989.

The county's drug court has been in place for several years now and Holmes feels that it has never been more needed. Last year in Virginia there were more deaths from heroin and opioids than highway fatalities for the first time, and the governor declared a public health emergency.

Nationally, opioids are said to be killing 90 people a day

International

[Oxy-courting - America's first opioid court is working well](#)

The Economist (UK)

Buffalo's experiment began after Jeffrey Smith, who heads the district's treatment courts, noticed that many of those arrested while high on opiates did not live long enough to make their court dates. The city has a history of developing such specialist courts. In the 1990s it was an early adopter of drug courts, which try to mentor defendants through rehabilitation rather than sending them to prison. Later it introduced mental-health courts. It created the first specialised court to try troubled military veterans, which has since been copied all over the country. It also launched the first human-trafficking court. Such specialist courts often arise when a judge tires of seeing the same defendants cycle endlessly through courts and prison.

National

[Christie opioid panel to reveal how drug crisis began](#)

nj.com

The final report of the White House opioid panel chaired by Gov. Chris Christie will not only discuss how to deal with the drug crisis but also look at how it happened in the first place.

Christie made his comments at the beginning of the fourth meeting of the [President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis](#), held Friday at the executive office building adjacent to the White House. The commission's final meeting and report is scheduled for Nov. 1

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

National

['Heartbreaking': Opioid crisis forces grandparents to raise their grandkids](#)

Today.com

As the opioid epidemic forces increasing numbers of children into foster care or otherwise out of their parents' custody, grandparents like the Krietemeiers are stepping in. Those [grandparents face the daunting task](#) of caring for young, vulnerable children while navigating courtrooms and complex child welfare systems, often with little financial or social support — all while coping with their adult offspring's addiction.

National

[Opinion - The problem with hospitalizing opioid addicts against their will](#)

Washington Post

We need studies to guide the crafting of new commitment laws and the revision of existing ones. How long should commitment last? What services should be required during commitment that increase the chances of a safe release back to the community? Without data, judges will face desperate parents and their children and continue to direct commitments one by one, restricting civil liberties without knowing whether they are reducing overdose deaths or if the clinical and public health resources are justified.

Illinois

[Drug Court graduate: 'I'm getting everything back that I lost'](#)

Springfield State Journal-Register

Spensberger was offered a chance to take part in Sangamon County's Drug Court and she accepted. The program helps people overcome their addiction, and on Friday, Spensberger and five other people successfully graduated from the program in a ceremony held in the Sangamon County Board chamber.

Sangamon County Circuit Judge Pete Cavanagh oversees the program, and said stories like Spensberger's aren't unusual. Over the past few years, more and more people have become addicted to heroin after first being prescribed painkillers. Heroin, like many of the painkillers, is an opioid-based narcotic.

"It's a warning for all people out there," Cavanagh said. "With these medications, it can be anyone. You don't necessarily need to be seeking the drugs to find the drugs. They've actually found you in what was believed to be a very appropriate, medically prescribed way.

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

Indiana

[Hoosier chief justice brings new muscle to opioid fight](#)

The Republic

Indiana's growing fight against a debilitating opioid addiction crisis just gained a powerful ally, who will collaborate and attack the problem from a national vantage point.

It's a growing sign of Hoosier authority in high places that can only benefit our state.

Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Loretta Rush has been selected to lead a task force of state court officials examining the justice system's role in combating the nation's opioid crisis.

Rush will co-chair the panel with Tennessee court administrator Deborah Taylor.

Kentucky

[Chief Justice Minton tells legislators the courts need more money, drug epidemic is crippling system](#)

Northern Kentucky Tribune

The escalating drug epidemic in Kentucky has crippled the judicial system too, he said.

The court system "has become ground zero for the resulting criminal and civil cases, including an explosion in Family Court," Minton told the committee. "Dependency, neglect and abuse cases fill our dockets as daily reminders of the grim toll the epidemic is taking on Kentucky families and children."

He said he is working with his counterparts throughout the region and the nation to establish best practices and provide a more unified response.

"We're grappling to keep up with rapid technological and social developments," he told lawmakers. "The opioid epidemic has expanded court caseloads and altered Drug Court treatment in ways we couldn't have imagined, even a few years ago. And like many other state courts, juvenile justice reform and pretrial justice reform are among our top priorities."

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

Kentucky

[Opinion: Family Drug Court deserves your support](#)

Courier-Journal (Louisville, KY)

Judge Denise Brown and Retired Judge Eleanore Garber, Guest Contributors

In 2008, after operating nine years and just as the opioid crisis shifted into high gear, public funding for the Jefferson County Family Drug Court went away.

Until then, now-retired Judge Eleanore Garber worked with a collaborative team and presided over Family Drug Court from its beginning to its untimely conclusion. Judge Garber and team members managed a holistic program for drug-dependent parents to work on recovery, maintenance of full-time employment, stable housing, parenting skills and overall well-being, with the goal of reunification with their children.

Michigan

[For Debbie Dingell and others speaking to Taylor teens, opioid abuse is personal](#)

Detroit Free Press

The event featured law enforcement, lawmakers, substance abuse counselors and local judges. They also heard from Shelby Chaltry, a former heroin addict who urged students to make better choices with their lives than she did.

Among the judges was Geno Salomone, chief judge of the 23rd District Court in Taylor, who moderated the event. He told the crowd that last year in the U.S., 66,000 people died of overdose - many of them OD'ing on prescription drugs.

"The opioid epidemic has wreaked havoc on our country," Kennedy said. "This is an epidemic ... that knows no boundaries across the nation. Young or old. Black or white. Rich or poor. Urban or rural. It affects countless."

Michigan

[Panel at Crain's health care summit: Education is key to battle opioid addiction](#)

Crain's Detroit Business

Panelists included Judge Linda Davis of Macomb County District Court, whose daughter once was a teenage heroin addict...

To help fix what she believed by experience was a broken system, Davis founded Operation Rx Macomb County and is president of Families Against Narcotics, which now has 20 chapters in Michigan. With first responders in Michigan and hospitals, Davis also helped to found Hope Not Handcuffs that helps addicts turn themselves in instead of getting arrested.

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

Davis said educational programs are key, not just for addicts, but also for medical professionals and law enforcement.

Minnesota

['The ugly truth' about opioids in Crow Wing County](#)

Brainerd Dispatch

Jill McKenzie, coordinator for the Crow Wing County drug court and DWI court, speaks on how opioid addiction impacted a member of her family.

New York

[Family comes first to Lockport's 'Hall of Fame' judge Bill Watson](#)

Lockport Union-Sun & Journal

Q: You take a lot of pride working with youths — and not just the ones who've made all the right choices. How has the recent heroin and opioid epidemic impacted your efforts at turning young lives around? Are we still sliding down hill or are we making positive strides?

A: Unfortunately, I think the answer is both. There will always be a percentage of youth in any community that find themselves "at-risk," but it's our job (the community's job) to provide as many positive alternatives as possible. In my career, unfortunately, I have seen many young lives lost due to the disease of addiction. I have created the Lockport Young Adult Court to specifically address this need, and I work with many organizations that are making a difference in the lives of our youth. While I understand that we can't save everyone, we still have to fight like we can.

New York

['It's like a tsunami': Opioid epidemic pushes kids into foster care](#)

Buffalo News

The opioid epidemic is not just killing hundreds of local residents – it's leaving hundreds of Erie County children without a home or at risk of being removed from one. They are orphaned children and they are the children of drug-addicted parents no longer able to care for them.

Erie County Family Court Judge Lisa Bloch Rodwin has presided at thousands of child abuse and neglect cases since 2011. She can't recall any cases related to opioid drug abuse four years ago, and only a handful three years ago.

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

"Now, it's like a tsunami," she said. "The victim is not just the parents. The victim is the children. The victim is the grandparent or aunt who is struggling to raise that child. There are so many victims."

Ohio

[Election Guide: Marietta Municipal Court Judge](#)

Marietta Times

As candidates, you've both indicated support for a drug court. Is that financially feasible and do you think it will come to fruition? Are there alternative solutions to the impact the drug epidemic is having on the court system?

Ohio

[Feds Award Family Drug Court Treatment Program \\$2.1 Million To Expand](#)

WYSO

The federal government has granted the Montgomery County Family Treatment Court additional funding to expand services for families affected by the opioid crisis. The \$2.1 million, five-year funding grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration will allow the court to expand those services to as many as 75 parents and 34 children a year, officials say.

Ohio

[Middletown Municipal Court candidates talk opioid epidemic, jail space](#)

Hamilton Journal News

Q: What can be done through the criminal justice system to win the heroin epidemic in Middletown?

Ohio

[Shawnee State University to hold panel discussion on local programs addressing opioid addiction](#)

Jackson County Times-Journal

The event will be led by Darren C. Adams, DO, Scioto County Coroner, and the panel will consist of community professionals including, Judge Alan Lemons, Scioto County Juvenile Court; Michael E. Martin, MD, Scioto County Health Commissioner; Lisa Roberts, RN, Portsmouth City Health Department, and Teresa Ruby, RN, Southern Ohio Medical Center Maternity.

The agenda consists of discussions of the opioid addiction and death rate in Scioto County, a list of all programs available in Scioto County, highlights of steps to decrease re-occurring opioid overdoses, and medical assisted treatments.

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

Ohio

[Stark courts spending more on treatment - Canton and Massillon judges look for money, Alliance finds ample reserves](#)

The Independent (Massillon, OH)

In August, Canton Municipal Court exhausted the money it had budgeted this year for treatment, and late last month dipped into \$83,000 in unbudgeted treatment dollars, money that will have to last until the next state disbursement in the spring.

“We’ve never been at this point before,” said Court Administrator Michael E. Kochera.

Ohio

[Whitehall will test programs to reduce opioid addiction and deaths](#)

The Columbus Dispatch

The \$400,000 awarded to Franklin County by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance will focus on Whitehall. The county is stressing programs that can provide addicts with drug-treatment services instead of jail.

The most significant change the federal money will pay for is what is believed to be Ohio’s first Mayor’s Drug Court.

Typically, mayor’s courts are for traffic tickets and misdemeanor criminal charges while drug courts are for those charged with more serious felony drug crimes. Under the new program, Whitehall will use its mayor’s court to also deal with drug-related crimes so it can offer help to addicts.

For example, those charged in Whitehall’s Mayor’s Court with theft — often committed to pay for drugs and feed addictions — can tell the judge they want help fighting addiction. The judge will connect them with services. The criminal charges and fines will be dropped if they enter treatment and undergo weekly meetings with the judge.

Pennsylvania

[Judge candidates ready to be on front lines of opioid battle](#)

Sunbury Daily Item

Addiction and dangerous drugs like opioids are among the most significant concerns for Sunbury District Judge candidates incumbent Judge Ben Apfelbaum and challenger Mike Toomey.

Opioids and the Courts News: Oct. 24, 2017

Tennessee

[One unexpected effect of Tennessee's opioid crisis? Longer jail stays for women](#)

The Tennessean

One unexpected effect of Tennessee's opioid epidemic is that women going through Tennessee's drug courts spend more time in jail than men arrested for the same crimes.

Taxpayers foot the bill for those longer jail stays.

Texas

[Why changing drug addiction stigma is so important to solving America's opioid epidemic](#)

KPRC Houston

Judge Linda Davis says you simply cannot overstate the seriousness of America's opioid problem.

“I think it’s a massive epidemic. I think it’s the worst epidemic this country has ever seen,” Davis said.

It’s an epidemic of drug abuse that Davis predicts will get worse.

She says the first challenge is to change the criminal stereotypes of drug addiction.

West Virginia

[Potomac State to screen drug documentary featuring Keyser native](#)

Keyser Mineral Daily News Tribune

“Heroin(e)” offers a unique focus on three women - fire chief Jan Rader; Judge Patricia Keller, who oversees drug cases in Cabell County and is originally from Keyser, and Necia Freeman, a concerned street pastor - all of whom deal with the fallout of the opioid crisis on a daily basis.