



# Opioids and the Courts News: Dec. 28, 2018

## National

['You Can Make It Out': Readers Share Stories of Opioid Addiction and Survival](#)

New York Times

“As a judge who presides over a sobriety court, I witness the hopes and exasperations on a daily basis. As a father of a daughter who has struggled with opioid addiction, I have experienced the hopelessness and desperation on a daily basis. The lack of resources and the confusion between abstinence or harm-reduction models make my head spin.”

— Jonathan Shamis, 57, Leadville, Colo.

## Kentucky

[Local circuit judge participates in sessions on bail reform, human trafficking and more at judicial college Oct. 22-24 in Lexington](#)

The Sentinel-Echo

Circuit Court Judges Michael O. Caperton, Stephen M. Jones and Gregory A. Lay, who serve Laurel and Knox counties, learned about bail reform, human trafficking, digital evidence, implicit bias and much more Oct. 22-24 at the 2018 Circuit Judges College in Lexington. The Education Committee of the Kentucky Circuit Judges Association and the Office of Judicial Branch Education at the Administrative Office of the Courts hosted the college.

“This was a great opportunity for judges to gain a deeper understanding of issues we see in our courtrooms,” said Circuit Judge Jean C. Logue, who serves Clark and Madison counties and is president of the Kentucky Circuit Judges Association. “We heard from experts on a number of timely topics, such as human trafficking, crime on the dark web, and gang involvement with the opioid epidemic. The judges also benefited from networking with their colleagues and sharing best practices and ideas.”

## Montana

[Montana lawmakers look to monitor opioids, expand treatment](#)

The Bozeman Daily Chronicle

[Attorney General Tim] Fox’s office said another legislative priority for the attorney general would be to expand specialty courts in the state, specifically those for drug treatment.

“Right now, the emphasis is on treatment courts, diverting people from incarceration and into treatment,” said John Barnes, a spokesman for the Department of Justice. Bills passed in 2017 centered on this philosophy as well, with mandatory minimum sentences removed for possession of marijuana along with jail time for a first-time possession charge.



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Currently, drug offenders make up most of Montana's prison population, according to the Department of Corrections.

Established in 1996, drug courts offer rehabilitation services for offenders in order to prevent them from entering the prison system. A 2017 report from Montana's Legislature showed a decrease in recidivism among those who completed treatment through a drug court.

"One of the problems is they typically rely on grants and a hodgepodge of funding," Fox said. "So, we're looking at a more permanent funding source."

### New York

[After hitting rock bottom, woman credits drug court for turnaround](#)

Glens Falls Post-Star

Withdrawal from opioids is "hell, pure hell," and fear of that pain is what keeps many addicts from trying to get clean, [drug court participant Jennifer] McIntosh explained.

The drug court program combines treatment with judicial supervision, community service and other requirements to put offenders on the path to sobriety. It takes anywhere from a year to three years to complete, depending on how many slip-ups a person has. Violations result in short jail stints or other sanctions.

[Kellee] Strong, the drug court coordinator, would not discuss McIntosh's case, and Warren County Probation Director Robert Iusi said he also could not discuss specific probationers.

But having seen the successes in the county's felony drug treatment court for over a decade, Iusi said there is no doubting the turnarounds that have occurred with those who make it through the program.

"We're very supportive of the drug court program, and the program in Warren County is outstanding," Iusi said.