

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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National

[15 States Reach a Deal With Purdue Pharma, Advancing a \\$4.5 Billion Opioids Settlement](#)

New York Times

Fifteen states have reached an agreement with Purdue Pharma, the maker of the prescription painkiller OxyContin, that would pave the way toward a settlement of at least \$4.5 billion and resolve thousands of opioid cases.

The states decided late Wednesday to drop their opposition to [Purdue's bankruptcy reorganization plan](#), in exchange for a release of millions of documents and an additional \$50 million from members of the Sackler family, the company's owners.

The agreement was contained in a late-night filing by a mediator in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in White Plains, N.Y.

The settlement extracts concessions that will be added to a [comprehensive proposal](#) now being voted on by more than 3,000 plaintiffs, including cities, counties, tribes and states, who sought to hold Purdue and its owners responsible for their role in the opioid epidemic. In the last two decades, more than [500,000 Americans](#) have [died](#) from overdoses of prescription and illegal opioids.

Iowa

[Linn County's Drug Treatment Court utilizes medication to fight opioid addictions](#)

CBS 2

Linn County is one of few Iowa counties with a specialized drug treatment court. Judge Fae Hoover has been with the program since it was established in Cedar Rapids in 2007.

“Drug Treatment Court is a way to deal with realities of our society in terms of substance use and mental health issues and be their best,” said Judge Hoover.

The Drug Treatment Court is a program designed to keep people on probation and who suffer from substance abuse out of prison. Candidates are interviewed for the program.

“There is a limit of who is able to come into the program and certainly [the] epidemic has [affected] all walks of life,” said Judge Hoover.

Louisiana

[Governor vetoes drug court bill pushed by Attorney General](#)

Louisiana Radio Network

Governor Edwards vetoed legislation pushed by Attorney General Jeff Landry that would have expanded state drug courts using funds obtained from opioid settlements.

Port Allen Senator Rick Ward said the veto of his bill came as a real surprise given there wasn't a single vote against it as it sailed through the Legislature.

"There was really never any opposition, even the committee meetings were very brief," said Ward. "It went through the process very seamlessly, it was one of the easier things from a support standpoint that I have handled in quite some time."

The bill mandated drug tests within 24 hours of a person being booked, and then called for screening those who test positive to determine if they suffer from a substance use disorder and thus qualify for entry into the drug court program.

In his veto statement, Edwards raised concerns the bill was too vague about how the Attorney General was allowed to spend the money, saying the management of the funds and expansion of the program should be handled instead by the Louisiana Supreme Court Drug and Specialty Court Office. Edwards also said there were other technical problems with the bill.

South Dakota

[Successful opioid addiction treatment slow to catch on in South Dakota](#)

South Dakota News Watch

While the treatment has been available for decades, access to medication-assisted treatment has gained traction in South Dakota only within the past five years. More than 90,000 drug overdose deaths are estimated to have occurred in the United States from September 2019 to September 2020, the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period according to the CDC. Opioid fatalities increased by 55% over the previous 12 months.

South Dakota experienced a more than 20% increase in all drug overdose deaths from 2019 to 2020, according to an emergency health alert from the CDC in December.