



Opioids and the Courts News: November 2, 2018

Indiana

[Addressing opioids requires stakeholders to work together](#)

Indiana Lawyer

[Family and Social Services Administration Bureau Chief Nicholas] Svetlauskas also praised Indiana's judicial response to the opioid crisis, specifically highlighting Rush's efforts to educate judges about the science behind addiction. As co-chair of the National Judicial Opioid Task Force, Rush leads a nationwide coalition examining the role courts play in combatting addiction and the opioid crisis.

Here in Indiana, Rush recently hosted a statewide opioid summit with judges from each of Indiana's 92 counties, a gathering [Brandon] George, [the executive director of Indiana Addiction Issues Coalition] described as historic. The summit sought to help judges understand the neuroscience of the brain, information Rush said was designed to increase their understanding of when an offender should be diverted into treatment. Indiana judges also recently participated in a half-day training on co-occurring disorders to understand the intersection between mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

This kind of training aligns with SAMHSA's Sequential Intercept Model, which seeks to determine when courts should divert offenders into treatment. According to SAMHSA, the model encompasses four intercepts: community and law enforcement; arrest and initial detention/court hearings; jails/specialty courts, and; reentry from jails and prisons into the community.

The idea of these intercepts, Rush told the task force, is to find points where the criminal justice system can hand off a person with a substance abuse disorder for treatment before the person's addiction further entrenches them in the system. Initiatives such as problem-solving courts and pre-trial diversion programs — both of which exist in Indiana — are examples of programs that creatively try to help people with addictions find recovery while also holding them accountable, she said.



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Montana

[Sen. Daines hears about illicit drug problems facing Montana](#)

KXLH Helena News

Jeff Kushner, drug-court coordinator for the Montana Supreme Court, also said two important steps are needed to help tackle [methamphetamine] use in Montana: Encourage wider use of the drug naltrexone to help addicts kick meth and allocate a block of money for each state for drug courts, rather than having states compete for grants.

“We’re relying on somebody inside the beltway, sitting at a desk at DOJ (Department of Justice) to make awards for drug courts in the state of Montana,” he said. “Is there anything more sillier than that?”

“We know where the next drug court needs to be. I mean, we know that Missoula doesn’t have an adult drug court and they need one.”

New York

[Opioid crisis: UB researcher hopes to provide clues on women’s shift to heroin](#)

UB News Center

A growing number of women in the U.S. are turning to heroin after first taking prescription opioid medication. This places them at greater risk for HIV and hepatitis C, and for spending time in the court system.

Scientists, however, have little insight into why this is happening. A University at Buffalo researcher, with colleagues from Columbia University and the University of Rochester, has received funding to provide some clues by working with a unique drug treatment court (DTC) in Buffalo.



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New York

[Mother's letter highlights opioid heartbreak & struggle](#)

WKBW-TV

Starting January 1, 2019, Amherst will become the first town/village in this area to operate an "Opiate Court."

The Amherst "Opiate Court" will run five (5) days a week - unlike the current "Drug Court" which is only one (1) day per week.

"Opiate Court" will only deal with opioid-related offenses with the goal of getting people into life-saving treatment as soon as possible.

"Upon arraignment, let's put the criminal charges aside for 90 days, get you into treatment, and then deal with the underlying criminal matter. But first and foremost, let's save your life," said Judge Buscaglia.

Ohio

[Don't lock them up: Opioid policy shakes up Ohio governor's race](#)

Politico

Two years after Ohio swooned over Donald Trump's law-and-order presidential campaign, the state is weighing a decidedly un-Trumplike solution to its spiraling opioid epidemic: Stop locking up drug users, and instead use the money to treat them.

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Such an instant structural shift would throw Ohio's existing drug enforcement and behavioral health systems into chaos, Issue 1's critics argue, opening the state up to unintended legal and practical consequences. That includes upending Ohio's sprawling and successful drug court system — a chief innovation that's emerged from the opioid crisis — by removing the threat of prison that the state uses to persuade offenders to enter treatment instead.