



Opioids and the Courts News: April 3, 2018

Connecticut

[Legislators want to study bringing opioid courts to Connecticut](#)

CT Post

If approved, the task force will be led by the state's chief court administrator. The Judicial Branch testified that it thinks opioid courts are unnecessary, however.

"The Judicial Branch has incorporated many principles of drug courts into all dockets and currently provides the same level of services to people in need of treatment from any docket," officials said in written testimony.

...

The Judicial Branch simply does not have the resources to study another model of drug court, said Rhonda Sterling Hebert, communications manager for the Judicial Branch. In the past two years, the Branch's budget has been cut by \$66 million and its staff is down by almost 16 percent.

Florida

[Judge Bristol and the Opioid Crisis](#)

Seventeenth Judicial Circuit

Judge Hope Bristol, Administrative Family Judge in the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit, coordinated a local training in Broward County on March 16th to address the opioid crisis. Showing how influential a judge can be as a convener, with less than two months' notice, Judge Bristol was able to gather over 60 attendees, including judges, magistrates, court staff, attorneys, child protective investigators, community-based care case managers, guardian ad litem representatives, and service providers.

Georgia

[Tifton officials work to solve opioid crisis at local level](#)

WALB-TV

Experts said opioid addiction is at a crisis level and more and more cases have been seen across South Georgia.

Tifton officials said that their city, like many others, has to do a better job at fighting the crisis.

"Two to three phone calls a week of people addicted to opioids. People don't realize how quickly they can become addicted," said Tifton Drug Court Judge Herbert Benson.



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Indiana

[Drug court can be godsend for many addicts](#)

Kokomo Tribune

As a public defender in the early 2000s, Judge Menges traveled to Akron, Ohio, to a training session for drug court. Howard County needed another court at the time to cope with the amount of drug-related cases, and while lobbying for that, Menges said they would start the drug court program here.

“What really got me interested in drug court more than anything was the fact that we have a 95 percent re-offense rate among traditionally treated drug offenders,” he said. “The national recidivism rate for people who are terminated from drug court at that point was 74 percent. Even just based on the people that failed the program, you still have a substantial reduction in recidivism, so my feeling was, ‘What do we have to lose?’”

Louisiana

[SPECIAL REPORT: Fighting the opioid crisis in SWLA](#)

KPLC-TV

"It's what we're not doing," said [Calcasieu Parish District Attorney John] DeRosier. "We're not remedying the problem. Identifying the problem is very easy, we know what the problem is, we have too many people using strong drugs. The drug courts, and the DWI courts, and the mental health courts are the way to make that happen."

DeRosier believes the state isn't putting enough money into those specialty courts, and overall not enough is being done.

Minnesota

[Duluth judge to serve on national opioid task force](#)

Duluth News Tribune

A Duluth judge has been appointed to a national task force that seeks to address the ongoing impacts of the opioid epidemic on the justice system.

Sixth Judicial District Judge Shaun Floerke is one of 20 judges, probation officers, attorneys and representatives from children and family services selected to serve on the National Judicial Opioid Task Force.