



Opioids and the Courts News: May 3, 2019

National

[Top Executives of Insys, an Opioid Company, Are Found Guilty of Racketeering](#)

The New York Times

A federal jury on Thursday found the top executives of Insys Therapeutics, a company that sold a fentanyl-based painkiller, guilty of racketeering charges in a rare criminal prosecution that blamed corporate officials for contributing to the nation's opioid epidemic.

The jury, after deliberating for 15 days, issued guilty verdicts against the company's founder, the onetime billionaire John Kapoor, and four former executives, finding they had conspired to fuel sales of its highly potent drug, Subsys, by not only bribing doctors to prescribe their product but also by misleading insurers about patients' need for the drug.

The verdict against Insys executives is a sign of the accelerating effort to hold pharmaceutical and drug distribution companies and their executives and owners accountable in ways commensurate with the devastation wrought by the prescription opioid crisis. More than 200,000 people have overdosed on such drugs in the past two decades.

Massachusetts

[Too Many Kids, Too Few Judges Mean Delays In Child Welfare Cases In Worcester County](#)

New England Public Radio

Some Court Proceedings Are Delayed Years

Worcester has more DCF [Department of Children and Families]-involved cases than any other Massachusetts county, affecting more than 2,000 children. Statewide, the DCF says cases have gone up nearly 40% since 2012 — largely because of the opioid epidemic and some high-profile tragedies involving children in state care.

Worcester Juvenile Court is also operating with only four judges because of a retirement and an open, newly approved judgeship. That often results in court proceedings like O'Donnell's being delayed for months. Some are put off for years.

"The whole system is really heartbreaking because now we're dealing with kids in foster care," O'Donnell says. "They've been abused, they've been neglected. Now they're in this system that's doing it all over again to them."

...





Opioids and the Courts News: May 3, 2019

A spokesperson for the trial court says it's assigning special judges to Worcester when it can. The trial court also launched an initiative last month to speed up proceedings in child dependency cases.

New York

[Federal funding heading to support local opioid addiction court expansion](#)

WIVB.com

Two million dollars will be put towards a program that will help people who are addicted to opioids find a path to recovery.

State and local leaders joined members of the Buffalo City Court, Friday, to announce an expansion of the Opioid Intervention Court.

It's a program that gives an addict who has been arrested and taken to court a chance to get treatment within hours of arrest.

“We work with individuals who are probably at the least or the lowest point in their lives, and I think it's on us to help lift them up,” said Buffalo City Court Judge Craig Hannah.

Among other items, the expansion includes providing people with access to housing resources and work development resources. The funds will also help the court program take on 60 more cases each year.

Ohio

[Courthouse one-stop-shop aims to ease path to sobriety](#)

The Columbus Dispatch

In what could be the first-of-its-kind courthouse-based program in Ohio, jail inmates upon release receive their initial shot of Vivitrol, a medication that reduces cravings and blocks brain receptors from feeling opioids' effects, in Franklin County Municipal Court.

...

But this is not a post-sentence drug court. It is a voluntary program for those found to be good candidates. Probation officers screen inmates to see who might be interested and ready, and judges can make recommendations to defendants who come before them. It is the result of cooperation between [Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein](#), the [Franklin County Municipal Court judges](#), Franklin County [Sheriff Dallas Baldwin](#), and others.

It is intended to be a sort of one-stop shop, where those heading right to the Wednesday clinic from jail can get wrap-around services such as meeting with providers and



Opioids and the Courts News: May 3, 2019

immediately being linked to treatment, getting help with housing if necessary, and meeting with Job and Family Services staffers. Then, they can take advantage of being at the court each month to meet with their probation officers on the same day if they are required.

The hope is that the ease of it all will lighten their burdens and clear barriers on the path to better lives, said Municipal Court Judge Eileen Paley, one of the drivers behind the program.

Vermont

[Opioid Crisis Overwhelming Judicial System](#)

Caledonian Record

A judicial system overwhelmed by the opioid crisis dominated discussion among attorneys, judges, and community members at Tuesday's Bench and Bar listening tour.

Judge Scott Kline, the presiding judge in Orleans County Superior Court, said the impact of opioid addiction cuts across all the dockets and courts in Orleans County.

Vermont Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Reiber agreed, saying the high court is seeing the trend as well.

"We've seen significant increases in the child abuse docket that anecdotally is attributed to opiate abuse," Reiber said to about three dozen people in the assembly room at the Goodrich Memorial Library.

West Virginia

[McKesson to pay \\$37 million to resolve West Virginia opioid lawsuit](#)

Reuters

Drug distributor McKesson Corp has agreed to pay \$37 million to resolve a lawsuit by the state of West Virginia seeking to hold it responsible for contributing to the opioid epidemic, the state's attorney general said on Thursday.

The settlement announced by West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey resolves one of hundreds of cases McKesson faces by states and local governments alleging it failed to identify suspicious orders by pharmacies of painkillers.

The settlement was the largest that a distributor has struck with a state in the litigation. West Virginia in 2017 settled similar cases against rival distributors Cardinal Health Inc and AmerisourceBergen Corp for \$20 million and \$16 million, respectively.

