



Opioids and the Courts News: September 27, 2019

National

[National Collaboration Addresses the Impact of Opioids on Children in State Courts](#)

State Justice Institute

With SJI support, the NCSC, the Institute for Intergovernmental Research (IIR), the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), and The National Judicial College (NJC) have developed a collaboration to assist state courts in addressing the impact of opioids on children.

This assistance provided by [the] collaboration is broken out into two focus areas: 1) Technical Assistance; and 2) Education and Training.

Focus Area 1: Technical Assistance

1. Infusing Family Treatment Court Core Principles to All Dependency Cases
2. Expanding the Blueprint Framework
3. Courts partnering with the medical community to address the needs of pregnant women with opioid use disorder and infants born substance-exposed

Focus Area 2: Education and Training

National

[Report: Opioids settlement won't fix areas hardest hit](#)

Associated Press

OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma's tentative legal settlement over the toll of the nation's opioid crisis is unlikely to reverse the consequences of the epidemic in the hardest-hit towns and regions, according to a report released Wednesday.

Purdue reached a tentative deal this month to resolve the lawsuits it faces. It could be worth up to \$12 billion over time, with a portion of the benefits coming in savings on opioid antidotes for governments rather than cash. It would be up to a bankruptcy court judge to approve the plan, which continues to face significant opposition.

So far, some key details have not been announced, including how the settlement would be divided among states and local governments. Nearly half of state attorneys general have not signed on, with many of them saying they object to the deal because it doesn't do enough to hold members of the wealthy Sackler family, which owns Purdue, accountable.



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In its report, the bond rating agency Moody's Investors Service said the deal would benefit state and local governments, but not enough to make up for the costs of the opioid crisis.

Arkansas

[Medication-aided opioid care slow to catch on in state](#)

Democrat-Gazette

Months of preparations had gone into the medication-assisted treatment program housed at a decades-old community health center in Clarendon. Signs were posted. Four providers at Mid-Delta Health Systems acquired credentials necessary to prescribe drugs used to treat opioid addiction. Clinic leaders touted the service to city officials.

But by August, the clinic had had just two patients sign up.

"We were literally expecting to be flooded and not have the capacity to take care of it," said the clinic's medical director, Dr. Curtis Schalchlin. "And then we were not." A slow start hasn't dashed the hopes of the group that has committed to providing the therapy in an area where a lackluster economy has left people vulnerable to addiction.

Indiana

[Indiana Chief Justice Rush: Let's Get Smart On Opioids](#)

Indiana Public Media

Indiana Chief Justice Loretta H. Rush emphasized the need for communities and the court system to come together to fight opioid abuse at the 2019 South Central Opioid Summit in Bloomington Tuesday evening.

The summit, which began in 2017, provides an opportunity for community members to gather and discuss solutions to substance abuse disorders.

The theme of this year's summit was "The Year of Integration: Working as 1."

Rush says cooperation is the most effective way to protect communities suffering from the effects of opioid abuse.

"We have to be involved with finding solutions," Rush says. "Because these people are before us on a daily basis. We see their lives being destroyed by addictions. We lock them up, their children go into foster care – we've gotta find a way to deal with the problem and the disease."



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Rush, who helped found the National Judicial Opioid Task Force, spoke about what courts have available to them in fighting opioid abuse.

The task force attempts to provide courts across the U.S. with the tools and resources necessary to help individuals successfully recover from opioid abuse, rather than punishing them for it.

“You can’t just say, ‘Ok, we’re gonna lock everyone up.’ That’s not working,” Rush says. “So, what treatments can we order? You can give a consequence to the behavior, but how do you deal with the disease of addiction?”

Indiana

[County judges tell lawmakers they need help with growing caseloads](#)

Greensburg Daily News

Court officials from five Indiana counties plagued by rapidly growing caseloads asked members of an interim study committee for financial assistance to create more resources in the local judiciary. The Interim Study Committee on Courts and the Judiciary, meeting for the first time Thursday, listened to court officials from Jennings, Hamilton, Marshall and Delaware counties describe how everything from opioids to jail overcrowding is creating problems in their local systems.

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Judge John Webster, the presiding circuit court judge in Jennings County, told the committee that a new magistrate would help out the two sitting judges with one of their community’s biggest problems—drugs and opioids.

New York

[How Ulster County is responding to the opioid crisis](#)

Daily Freeman

A new Opioid Court is being developed in the city of Kingston that will enable a person to have their case suspended for 90 days and be immediately moved into a treatment program. The county has provided funding to the court to cover the cost of transporting that individual from court to the treatment program.

The county is also using a portion of its funding to provide grants for 32 individuals to become certified peer recovery advocates and to give law enforcement the resources they need to fight the battle on the streets.



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North Carolina

[Foster care case numbers continue to climb in NC, as opioid crisis affects families](#)

North Carolina Health News

The foster care system in North Carolina continues to experience record levels of need, the increases believed to be yet another aspect of the devastation from the opioid abuse epidemic.

As of mid-summer, there were 11,700 children and teens younger than 20 in the foster care system. According to the NC Department of Health and Human Services, that's a 20 percent jump from just five years ago. Some of those children are in family foster homes. Other children stay with non-parental relatives as part of the state's focus on kinship care to lessen the trauma experienced by children entering the system.

Those numbers also include more than 800 older teenagers. Those young people can opt to continue receiving support services such as health care through the age of 21 if they are working or in school, one of a series of reforms passed in 2017 by the state legislature.

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Social workers are also steering parents toward resources for treating addiction, if applicable, and the courts often include it as a condition of being reunified with children.

Ohio

[A Decade of Diversion: Franklin County's Court For Addiction Recovery](#)

WOSU

"If you walk in my courtroom, you would see that it's a very different environment when I do drug court," says Judge Jodi Thomas.

Thomas presides over HART, which stands for "Helping Achieve Recovery Together." It's an opioid-specific program, and one of two drug recovery court dockets in the Franklin County system.

"I don't sit on the bench," Thomas says. "I take the robe off. I sit down with the participants and I'm looking them eye-to-eye and engaging them with conversations about the work that they're doing to better their lives."



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Ohio

[Treating addiction, in and out of jail](#)

Yellow Springs News

That said, those battling addiction face steep odds, in jail and out.

“Once you have addiction, the statistics aren’t great for overcoming it,” Fairborn Municipal Court Judge Beth Cappelli observed in a recent interview with the News.

Four years ago, Judge Cappelli founded Greene County’s first — and so far only — state-certified drug court, which provides intensive supervision and drug treatment to certain misdemeanor offenders in lieu of normal probation or jail time.

She started the court in response to local impacts of the opioid epidemic.

“We just had so many opioid-addicted people who were dying,” she said.

Statewide, the height of the opioid epidemic was 2017. While more recent statistics suggest the trend may be moderating somewhat, opioid addiction is still a huge problem in our area, according to Cappelli.

“We’re still seeing the trend,” she said.

The Fairborn Municipal Drug Court was originally targeted to people with opioid addiction, but has been broadened to serve those with any drug or alcohol dependency.

About two-thirds of Ohio’s 88 counties have at least one drug court, and Gov. Mike DeWine has pledged to expand that number substantially.

Not all drug courts are alike. The Fairborn court focuses on the “highest risk” cases — people for whom normal probation hasn’t worked in the past, according to Cappelli.

“They’ve reached the point where they’re ready to try something new,” she said.

Virginia

[Editorial: The opioid crisis and solutions in RVA](#)

Richmond Times-Dispatch

The size of the standing-room only crowd at the RTD’s 78th Public Square last week about the opioid crisis reflected the enormity of this scourge ravaging our communities. The event brought together local law enforcement, health and government officials, community advocates and many enrolled in addiction programs for a wide-ranging discussion about how the Richmond region is working together to tackle this insidious epidemic.



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Moderated by RTD President and Publisher Thomas A. Silvestri, the panel of experts featured Hanover County Sheriff David Hines; Chesterfield County Fire and EMS Chief Edward “Loy” Senter Jr.; Dr. Danny Avula, director of Henrico County’s and Richmond’s health districts; and Ivy Sager, director of the Hanover County Community Services Board. The regional representation showed how the epidemic transcends municipal boundaries.

“We’re looking for solutions,” Hines told the crowd, adding that he responded to an overdose on the way to Wednesday’s event.