

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

January 4, 2021



National

[What's behind the historic spike in drug overdose deaths under COVID-19](#)

PBS News Hour

Why have overdose deaths gone up?

These latest figures further support observations by experts that thousands of Americans struggling with substance use have been suffering beyond the immediate effects of the pandemic, which has complicated access to basic resources.

Earlier during the COVID-19 pandemic, stay-at-home orders were put into place to prevent unnecessary illness, death, and collapse of the U.S. health care system. With a recent third surge of infections breaking daily records for new hospitalizations and deaths linked to the virus, several states have kept a patchwork of those public health precautions in place as the U.S. has failed to contain COVID-19.

But in doing so, transportation to clinics became complicated. Many people feared going to a doctor's office could spread the virus further. In-person talk therapy sessions were abandoned for video conferencing. Some experts have said those options, while better than nothing, are not as effective for people who recently decided to enter recovery.

CDC Director Robert Redfield cautioned the nation in a released statement that "it's important to not lose sight of different groups being affected in other ways. We need to take care of people suffering from unintended consequences."

Nebraska

[Drug courts, counseling and education help reduce Nebraska's rate of drug abuse](#)

Journal Star

While drug use is prevalent around North Platte, Officer Matt Elder, a North Platte police spokesman, said he wouldn't necessarily say the area has a drug problem. The drugs he sees regularly aren't usually ones that contribute to deaths from drug overdoses.

"When you get into the overdose deaths, you most likely see a lot of the heroin and fentanyl," Elder said. "I'm not going to say it's not here, but we don't have the problem that you see in other Midwestern states and big cities. We mainly see the meth, the marijuana, cocaine."

Region II Human Services in North Platte offers a medication-assisted treatment program, which uses medication management, treatment and counseling to help people with opioid addiction.