



Opioids and the Courts News: March 7, 2018

State of the Judiciary Address

[Washington Chief Justice Mary Fairhurst](#)

Significant challenges face Washington's judicial branch including responding to the national opioid crisis, which brings many more addicted persons to the courts for actions related to addiction

National

[Can This Judge Solve the Opioid Crisis?](#)

New York Times

[Judge Dan Aaron Polster](#) of the Northern District of Ohio has perhaps the most daunting legal challenge in the country: resolving more than 400 federal lawsuits brought by cities, counties and Native American tribes against central figures in the national opioid tragedy, including makers of the prescription painkillers, companies that distribute them, and pharmacy chains that sell them. And he has made it clear that he will not be doing business as usual.

During the first hearing in the case, in early January, the judge informed lawyers that he intended to dispense with legal norms like discovery and would not preside over years of "unraveling complicated conspiracy theories." Then he ordered them to prepare for settlement discussions immediately.

Not a settlement that would be "just moving money around," he added, but one that would provide meaningful solutions to a national crisis — by the end of this year.

"I did a little math," he said, alluding to the rising number of overdoses. "About 150 Americans are going to die today, just today, while we're meeting."

National/West Virginia

[This Town Is At The Center Of The US Opioid Crisis. Here's The Story](#)

Buzzfeed

Nothing is simple in drug court.

"I feel like you and I have been having this little cat and mouse game," Judge Greg Howard tells a tall, bearded young man seated at the table below him one Monday morning in February.

"First it's about your employment, whether it was under the table or not. Now it is about whether you are flirting with or dating someone else in the program," said Howard with exasperation, leaning forward on his judge's bench as the man nodded and hid a grin.

"I want you to focus on the drug problem."



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Michigan

[Opioids challenge time, cash of Gratiot County's courts, law enforcement](#)

Morning Sun News

In the county's court system, a majority of the drug cases that are prosecuted now involve opioids and heroin, said Gratiot County Prosecutor Keith Kushion.

"I would say that five years ago, our biggest problem was methamphetamine use and production," Kushion said.

Ohio

[Health Secretary to Miami Valley: 'You are not alone' in opioid fight](#)

Dayton Daily News

During a round-table at Brigid's Path, an inpatient care facility in Kettering for newborns suffering from prenatal drug exposure, [U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex] Azar got to hear from Congressman Mike Turner, R-Dayton, Montgomery County Juvenile Court Judge Anthony Capizzi, children services representatives and local families and children who have been affected by opioid addiction.