

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

April 1, 2022



National

[Elder Justice Innovation Grants](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living

Since FY2016, the ACL has made 28 awards to address various topics of relevance, and has forecasted making additional awards in FY2022 for [Enhancing APS Approaches to Cases Involving Opioids and Substance Use Disorders](#), [Improving Results for APS Clients](#), and [Improving Guardianship](#).

Kentucky

[Nearly nine years sober, businesswoman has message of hope for Drug Court graduates](#)

The State Journal

Ashley McCarty had built a successful career in pharmaceutical sales when, after a couple of surgeries, she became addicted to opioids.

Now the director of sales at Bluewater Diagnostic Laboratory, she had a message for the graduates of Franklin County Drug Court.

“We all make mistakes,” she told those attending Wednesday’s graduation ceremony on the steps of the Franklin County Courthouse. McCarty will reach nine years of sobriety on July 20.

“The past does not define you, and never let it limit your future,” she added. “It’s not easy, but with hard work and determination, no goal is out of reach.”

Massachusetts

[Mass. drug courts settle with US Attorney’s Office over interfering with treatment](#)

GBH

The Massachusetts Trial Court has agreed to stop ordering and pressuring its drug court defendants to take a specific medication for opioid use disorder and will instead leave medical decisions to licensed prescribers and treatment programs.

Massachusetts U.S. Attorney Rachael Rollins’ office received a complaint that the drug courts were violating the Americans with Disabilities Act by discriminating against people with opioid use disorder, a recognized disability under federal law. The complaint alleged that staff were forcing drug court participants to stop taking other prescribed medications in favor of naltrexone, known by the brand name Vivitrol,

without individual medical assessment as to whether that would be the best treatment option. [Rollins' office and the court reached a settlement](#) Thursday over the allegations.

Drug courts offer alternatives to incarceration, including mandated treatment, to people charged with nonviolent, drug-involved crimes. The first drug court in Massachusetts opened in 1994.

“Judges are experts, but they are not doctors,” Rollins told GBH News. “Essentially, what would happen is when you were in drug court there would be personnel who are not licensed medical professionals or providers that would be encouraging individuals or forcing individuals exclusively to [take] Vivitrol, as opposed to the three different types of FDA-approved medications prescribed by licensed medical providers, to assist with opioid use disorders.”

Pennsylvania

[Wolf Administration Visits Valley Health Partners Community Health Center, Highlights Expansion of Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Rural Pennsylvania](#)

Office of the Governor

Today, the Wolf Administration visited Lehigh Valley Health Network’s Valley Health Partners Community Health Center (VHP) to discuss their participation in the administration’s expansion of the Rural Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment in Pennsylvania project (Project RAMP). Project RAMP expands access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder (OUD) across primary care providers in rural Pennsylvania.