

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

## Weekly Review

February 3, 2023



### National/Massachusetts

#### [Holyoke Early Access to Recovery and Treatment \(HEART\): A case study of a court-based intervention to reduce opioid overdose](#)

Journal of Ethnicity and Substance Abuse

The District Court in Holyoke, Massachusetts is among the first courts nationwide to provide access to medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and other treatment. The program uses an innovative multisectoral approach to serve a primarily Latinx population living in communities of concentrated poverty with high opioid overdose rates. We document the origins, adaptations, and current status of program operations, including the use of on-site peer recovery specialists and robust data collection efforts. From August 16, 2021 to February 28, 2022, of the 1040 individuals who entered the court for an arraignment, 47.9% (n = 498) were eligible for program participation. Of those 498 individuals, 54.2% (n = 270) spoke with a recovery specialist. Many self-identified as Latinx (53.0%) and male (69.3%). Over one fourth (27.0%) were connected to a long-term peer recovery specialist, and 11.5% were directly connected to a MOUD provider. Semi-structured interviews with key implementers and participants revealed a shared appreciation for the life-saving efforts of the program. We conclude with practical and theoretical considerations required to offer linkage to MOUD in court-based contexts. Future efforts will assess participant outcomes to determine whether the program is an effective and feasible intervention that can be adopted by other court-based settings.

### Georgia

#### [Addiction recovery advocates want lawmakers to budget more for peer support specialists](#)

Georgia Public Broadcasting

This [funding will help individuals with substance use disorders](#) who are moving through the drug court system restabilize their lives by expanding prevention and treatment programs and increasing access to community behavioral health promotion services, the White House said in a press release.

### Indiana

#### [Marion man says drug court has changed his life drastically](#)

Marion Star

Reflecting on nearly 15 consecutive months of uninterrupted sobriety almost brought Chad Hazelton to tears during his drug court graduation ceremony last Friday.

“It feels good to be free from the addictions, but I know it will always be a battle,” Hazelton told the audience of family, friends, fellow program participants, and Marion County Common Pleas Court staff members who gathered in the gymnasium at Marion First Church of the Nazarene to honor and support him.

The 46-year-old Marion man was emotional at times as he shared what the [Marion County Common Pleas Court’s F.I.R.S.T. \(Focusing on Individual Recovery, Success and Treatment\) program](#) has meant to him and how it has changed his life for the better.

### Virginia

[A year later, Culpeper drug treatment court has grown, seen successes](#)

Culpeper Star-Exponent

Almost a year up and running, the Culpeper County Drug Court has grown substantially, is seeing positive results, and the beginning of lives changed.

Now the program, affectionately known among organizers as Drug Treatment Court, could receive financial support through opioid settlement funds from national drug companies.

Millions of dollars from the first of various settlements are trickling into localities across America impacted by substance abuse and overdoses.

Attorney generals across the country have and are suing various opioid makers and distributors for not being truthful about the potential for addiction to the often deadly substances.