



Opioids and the Courts News: Dec. 15, 2017

National

[Opioid crisis straining foster system as kids pried from homes](#)

Associated Press

Across the U.S., soaring use of opioids has forced tens of thousands of children from their homes, creating a generation of kids abandoned by addicted parents, orphaned because of fatal overdoses or torn from fractured families by authorities fearful of leaving them in drug-addled chaos.

National

[Q&A: How is the US opioid crisis affecting children?](#)

Associated Press

HOW IS THIS ANY DIFFERENT THAN BEFORE?

Drugs have always been a major driver of children into the foster care system, but officials haven't seen something of this magnitude since the wave of crack cocaine use in the 1980s. Today's opioid epidemic is the deadliest surge of drug use in the country's history.

Indiana

[SHEPARD: Indiana leaders are rising to fight opioid crisis](#)

Indianapolis Business Journal

Indiana operates more than 80 specialized drug courts and problem-solving courts, and the nation's second-largest child advocacy program. Chief Justice Loretta Rush has accelerated court efforts to deal more effectively with the epidemic. Early in the year, she signed Indiana on to a regional initiative created by six Midwestern and mid-South court systems to share data, expand education for various actors in the criminal justice system, and create pilot programs in targeted sites along state borders.

In the fall, Rush agreed to co-chair a national task force for the Conference of Chief Justices and the National Center for State Courts. Its objective will be to identify unmet needs, share new strategies, and address the impact of the opioid crisis on children.



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Kentucky

['We're actually dealing with human beings.' Panel urges more money for child protection](#)

The Courier-Journal

Panel chairman Roger Crittenden, a retired Franklin circuit court judge, said the panel believes it's increasingly urgent that the state fully fund child protective services, given the opioid epidemic sweeping Kentucky and flooding the system with more child abuse and neglect cases.

The panel also recommended better funding for public health programs to help children and families as well as increased focus on effective drug treatment services, including restoring state money for family drug courts that was discontinued in 2010 after state legislators unexpectedly slashed the court budget.

Maine

[Inmate Revived From Apparent Opioid Overdose in Courthouse](#)

Associated Press

An inmate at a Maine courthouse suffered an apparent opioid overdose, but officers were able to revive her through the use of the overdose reversal drug naloxone.

Maine

[Maine opiate crisis task force says it's time for action](#)

Bangor Daily News

The task force, which was created by the Legislature earlier this year, echoed a number of recommendations from previous groups, including [the 2016 Maine Opiate Collaborative](#). That group, [launched by Gov. Paul LePage](#), held forums in 20 Maine communities. Its recommendations included expanding access to health care and drug courts and focusing more law enforcement efforts on drug dealers from outside Maine.

Maine

[Opioid Task Force Wants More Focus on Kids, the Incarcerated](#)

Associated Press

"I'm determined this report won't sit on a shelf and collect dust," said Democratic Rep. Joyce McCreight, co-chair of the task force. She said she will seek support from colleagues on directing more money for treatment, prevention and court programs.



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Maine

[Task Force to Address the Opioid Crisis in the State](#)

Task Force to Address the Opioid Crisis in the State

Recommendation: The Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary consider introducing legislature that develops additional drug courts or increases access to existing drug courts access the state and provides the necessary funding.

Massachusetts

[Wariness, excitement follow plans to expand drug courts](#)

The Boston Globe

Supporters say drug courts are a compassionate, practical response to addiction-fueled crime and a revolving prison door. But the experience in Massachusetts, where participants in the state drug courts [have often been sent to jail for days, weeks, and even months if they relapse](#) or are kicked out of treatment programs, has given rise to skepticism about expanding the approach on the federal level.

North Carolina

[Drug Court is in session](#)

Winston-Salem Chronicle

This month, Forsyth County's Drug Treatment Court held its first session in hopes that it'll help those with substance abuse issues on the long road to recovery.

It's a return for the county's adult drug court, which previously lasted 15 years before it ended in 2011 when its state funding was cut. District Court Judge Lawrence Fine presided over that court and has returned for the new one. Back then, crack and meth were the major drugs. This time opioids have become a nationwide epidemic.



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Ohio

[State Funds Crucial To Opioid Addiction Services](#)

WCBE 90.5 FM

Kasich says deadly overdoses from prescription painkillers are at six-year low, and he credits the state's crackdown on pills mills in 2011. But heroin deaths have spiked more than 300% since 2010, and deaths involving fentanyl are up nearly 10 times that. U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown is wondering about lawmakers' reactions to the crisis. "They're not doing enough. They're not scaling up the treatment programs quickly enough," Brown said. "Clearly the state legislature keeps trying to cut Medicaid spending."

But House Finance Committee Chair Ryan Smith counters that by saying \$20 million was put into the budget for new treatment facilities, and more money was added for kinship care, child protective services and drug and mental health courts.

Oklahoma

[Collaboration leading Oklahoma's opioid battle](#)

Journal Record

Funding treatment is a crucial component to addressing the crisis the state faces.

"Being smart on crime means you have to be smart on funding treatment and rehabilitation," [Oklahoma Attorney General Mike] Hunter said. "We've never funded drug courts to the extent we need to."

Pennsylvania

[Lawmakers Consider Letting Families Use Courts To Get Addicts Into Treatment](#)

90.5 WESA

As part of the effort to fight opioid addiction, Pennsylvania state Sen. Jay Costa (D - Forest Hills) has proposed a [bill](#) that would allow courts to send people to substance abuse treatment at the request of family members.

Policymakers, doctors and other care providers explored how the proposal could be implemented at a hearing at Duquesne University Friday.

Costa said his proposal would meet a critical need for families throughout the state.



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Pennsylvania

[Senate hearing focuses on mandated drug addiction treatment](#)

South Pittsburgh Reporter

At the request of state Senate Democratic Leader Jay Costa, the state Senate Democratic Policy Committee held a hearing last week on legislation that would enable families to seek court-ordered addiction treatment for their loved ones.

“As this opioid addiction epidemic worsens, it is imperative that we empower families to help loved ones in the throes of drug addiction to get the treatment they desperately need,” Mr. Costa said. “In many cases, this is a matter of life or death.”

The [Allegheny County](#) lawmaker has introduced Senate Bill 391, which would enable family members to petition the court to commit for drug addiction treatment someone who is an imminent danger to themselves or others. The proposed court-ordered treatment could only be considered if the addict has overdosed, is a suicide threat, has been unable to adequately care for themselves or is a threat to others.

Virginia

[Opioid treatment program coming to Greenville](#)

Staunton News Leader

Gov. Terry McAuliffe announced Tuesday that his 2019-2020 biennial budget will include \$76 million to help combat the opioid epidemic and improve behavioral health treatment.

The proposed funding will improve behavioral health services through community services boards, expand access to drug court, establish residential treatment programs for non-violent offenders, hire more parole and probation officers and pay for six additional forensic scientists to test substances, a release said. It also expands access to medically-assisted treatment for people with opioid addictions.



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Virginia

[Opioids in Alexandria: Justice in the midst of crisis](#)

Alexandria Times

Many jurisdictions around the country have introduced drug courts as one possible solution to the growing problem of drug-related crime. Drug courts work to rehabilitate nonviolent offenders who have agreed to certain terms. As part of undergoing drug court, individuals participate in treatment while being monitored closely for the minimum term of one year. The program usually requires monthly visits to a judge, regular and random drug testing and sanctions if they do not meet obligations.

Several Northern Virginia jurisdictions have already established drug courts, including neighboring Arlington Circuit Court.

Virginia

[Va. Gov. McAuliffe trying to tame the growing opioid crisis](#)

WTOP

McAuliffe said \$10 million will be spent to help individuals who have an opioid addiction get medically assisted treatment. Also, funding for fighting the epidemic will go toward establishing residential treatment programs for nonviolent offenders who have a history of opioid abuse, and for expanding drug-treatment courts.

McAuliffe pledged \$800,000 toward expanding access to drug courts. He said he also wants the state to spend \$2.3 million to hire more probation and parole officers.