

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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National

[Pharmacies face 1st trial over role in opioid crisis](#)

Associated Press

In a bellwether federal trial starting Monday in Cleveland, Lake and Trumbull counties will try to convince a jury that the retail pharmacy companies played an outsized role in creating a public nuisance in the way they dispensed pain medication into their communities.

This will be the first time pharmacy companies, in this case CVS, Walgreens, Giant Eagle and Walmart, have gone to trial to defend themselves in the nation's ongoing legal reckoning over the opioid crisis. The trial, which is expected to last around six weeks, could set the tone for similar lawsuits against retail pharmacy chains by government entities across the U.S.

The trial will center on the harm to the counties and the response by the pharmacy chains, which have argued in court filings that their pharmacists were merely filling prescriptions written by physicians for legitimate medical needs. The trial also has a human dimension, watched closely by those whose family members are part of the roughly 500,000 Americans whose deaths are attributed to opioid abuse over the past two decades.

New Mexico

[Treatment instead of jail time](#)

Taos News

The County Board of Commissioners became the first party to sign the memorandum of understanding, which will ideally be a joint effort between the county, town, jail, law enforcement, the Eighth Judicial District Attorney's office and local behavioral health service providers.

Eighth Judicial District Attorney Marcus Montoya said his office looks forward to participating in the LEAD [Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion] program, which he sees as an overall positive for the community. He hopes the program will put a stop to "the endless catch-and-release cycle we are currently experiencing."

"There exists no magic-bullet solution to any social issue, but LEAD at least allows us other tools in attacking age-old, addiction-related problems in our community," he said.

New York**[Governor Hochul Signs Legislation Package to Combat Opioid Crisis](#)**

Office of the Governor

Legislation S.7228/A.5511 expands the number of eligible crimes committed by individuals with a substance use disorder that may be considered for diversion to a substance use treatment program and updates the term “substance abuse” to “substance use.” This ensures judges can order an individual to treatment instead of incarceration, allowing them a greater chance for successful, long-term rehabilitation.

