

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

## Weekly Review

September 1, 2023



### National

#### [Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta Delivers Remarks at the 2023 Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant and Substance Use Program National Forum](#)

U.S. Department of Justice

The Civil Rights Division has also done important enforcement work in this area. In February 2022, for example, the division filed suit against Pennsylvania’s Unified Judicial System, alleging that it violates the ADA through component courts’ restrictions on the use of medications for opioid use disorder in court supervision programs; those included drug courts, mental health courts, and probation programs.

Civil rights enforcement work by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices has likewise brought positive results in this area. One example is a Settlement Agreement with the Massachusetts Trial Court that ensured participants in Massachusetts drug courts would not be prohibited from using opioid treatment medications prescribed by a licensed prescriber or opioid treatment program.

### Florida

#### [Alachua County seeks to expand drug rehabilitation efforts](#)

The Independent Florida Alligator

Claudia Tuck, director of the Alachua County community support services department, noted the resident therapeutic community, county drug court, outpatient care, and syringe exchange programs as services offered publicly and privately in the county.

[Metamorphosis](#), a long-term, high-intensity resident therapeutic community is open 24 hours a day, has a 21-bed capacity and is primarily justice involved, Tuck said. Most of the residents in Meta come from [County Drug Court](#), which offers an alternative for individuals with substance abuse disorders who have felony criminal charges in Alachua County.



## Georgia

### [City approves plan to disburse opioid settlement funds during week of International Drug Overdose Awareness Day](#)

Douglas Now

As you might imagine, the settlement is complicated and involves a number of different parts. However, the short of it is that the litigation is a multi-billion-dollar suit that pays out funds to state and local governments over 18 years. At Monday's meeting, City Manager Charlie Davis announced [that] Douglas will receive \$270,000 as a part of the suit. That money will be paid out over the previously mentioned 18-year period. The commission agreed to authorize city personnel to speak with Superior Court Judge Dwayne Gillis, who oversees the local drug court, and Unison Behavioral Health, to develop a plan to utilize those funds. There are specific guidelines that must be followed regarding how the money can be spent. In the end, the commission agreed to contract with the drug court and Unison to allocate the money in such a way that satisfies the settlement's stipulations.

## Minnesota

### [Fentanyl epidemic a 'nightmare' for local families](#)

The Mankato Free Press

The Gustavsons have been [upfront] talking about fentanyl since Travis' death. On Aug. 20 and in previous years they teamed up with Kara Richardson, a correctional officer in Blue Earth County and forensic and recovery specialist with the county's adult drug court, to organize the awareness events.

Travis' family has also spoken about their profound loss in court. In December 2022, Anna Marie Bailey received about a two-year prison sentence for third-degree murder related to supplying Travis with fentanyl before his death.

Another person accused of supplying Travis with the fentanyl, Max Leo Miller, has a third-degree murder trial set to begin on Sept. 5.

Nicki LeTourneau knew the court dates off the top of her head for the three people charged in relation to Eva's death. Connor Lee Hoeft, Haley Marie Ross, and Kueth Pamier Ruae were all charged with third-degree aiding and abetting murder afterward.

## **Pennsylvania**

[Lancaster County board of commissioners approve opioid dollars for DA's office in split vote](#)

Lancaster Online

The move also adds a potentially reliable source of revenue for the district attorney's office. For now at least, the \$193,000 will cover two positions — a detective for Lancaster County Drug Task Force and a prosecutor in the diversionary court system — for 2024.

## **Virginia**

[OAA awards \\$11 million to Virginia agencies to address opioid epidemic](#)

Southwest Virginia Today

The second project is for \$200,000 for the agency to work in coordination with the Training Committee of the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court to develop a training curriculum and plan to offer training to judges, Commonwealth's Attorneys, defense attorneys, magistrates, probation officers and other professionals who work in the court system on the topic of substance use disorders.

Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia (OES), \$500,000

OES will use these funds to develop a statewide best practices standard for drug testing within all the alternative dockets and promote awareness about that standard to all localities that provide financial support to alternative dockets.

## **Washington**

[New stats on drug cases in King County paint stark picture of fentanyl crisis across region](#)

KIRO

The King County Drug Court was started in 1994 by Republican Norm Maleng and King County Superior Court Judge Ricardo Martinez. This program is available to adults who have been charged with any other lower-level and nonviolent drug-related crimes. The 10 months help the participants rebuild their lives by addressing the causes of their criminal choices.