



Opioids and the Courts News: Dec. 7, 2018

National/Task Force

[How State Courts Are Fighting Our National Opioid Epidemic](#)

Law360

The National Judicial Opioid Task Force

Opioid addiction is not confined to Indiana and surrounding states: It has swept into every community and has flooded every court across our country. This is a national crisis. But it is a situation in which well-reasoned, evidence-based judicial interventions can get people to treatment, deliver appropriate consequences, cut the destructive supply, support families and save lives.

Federal, state and local leaders have mobilized an attempt to address many of the primary impacts on our communities. But the secondary impacts on state court systems have yet to be fully acknowledged or addressed. Not only state criminal courts, but all jurisdictions — including juvenile and civil dockets — have been exponentially affected by the scope and magnitude of the problem. For example, a misdemeanor drug offense often results in a host of other issues that can spread across numerous courts. Those issues may involve eviction, removal of children, bankruptcy, conservatorship or other major life-altering matters. And the number of children placed in foster care has dramatically risen, outpacing many communities' capacity to provide the services that these children and their families need. State courts have also been facing a lack of adequate community-treatment options for those with OUD.

At the same time, according to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#), the No. 1 referral source to get addicted individuals to treatment is the criminal justice system. And 95 percent of all cases in our country are filed in state courts. So in developing a successful national policy response to the opioid epidemic, equipping state courts with the crucial resources to identify and respond to the need for treatment is essential.

The Honorable Loretta Rush is chief justice of Indiana and co-chair of the National Judicial Opioid Task Force.

National

[Michael Bloomberg's Charity Announces \\$50 Million Donation to 'Turn the Tide' on Opioid Epidemic](#)

Time Magazine

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's charity has announced a \$50 million donation to help fight the nation's opioid epidemic.



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Bloomberg Philanthropies said over the next three years it will help up to 10 states address the causes of opioid addiction and strengthen prevention and treatment programs. Its initiative involves a partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Johns Hopkins University, and Vital Strategies.

Bloomberg said on Friday during his keynote address at The Bloomberg American Health Summit in Washington that he believes “we can turn the tide on this epidemic.”

“And if we do,” he said, “we can begin reversing the decline in life expectancy that has been happening across the country, thanks largely to opioid overdoses.”

Indiana

[Appellate courts seek extra \\$1M for legal aid, technology](#)

Indiana Lawyer

Indiana Chief Justice Loretta Rush presented her request for an additional \$500,000 for civil legal aid in fiscal years 2020 and 2021 to the State Budget Committee on Monday afternoon. Currently, the state allocates \$1.5 million to civil legal aid each year, an amount that has not changed since 2007.

The additional \$1 million over a two-year period would be used to help close the justice gap, Rush told members of the Budget Committee. Pointing to the opioid crisis as an example of the need for civil legal aid, Rush said that once drug offenders are rehabilitated through the criminal justice system, they often find themselves in the civil system to address issues such as eviction or child support. She also gave the example of veterans unable to access their benefits without legal assistance.

Michigan

[Second-chance court](#)

Detroit Free Press

If the addicts are nonviolent repeat offenders, a magistrate or an attorney or a judge might refer them to drug court, where the [objective] is to prevent them from committing more drug-related crimes — and to save on incarceration costs — by offering rehab and strict probation in lieu of jail.

The approach makes perfect sense, said Judge Linda Davis, who oversees 41B drug court and is a nationally recognized speaker on the subject. “Without treatment, they don’t change the behavior that landed them (in jail). It’s like any other disease. If you took someone with diabetes and put them in jail, they’d still come out with diabetes.... Rather than wasting our resources by putting somebody in jail and feeding and housing them for however long we’re going to, if we took those same resources and put them into



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rehabilitation and recovery, we could actually turn people's lives around and make them productive members of society."

Michigan

[What's a drug court? And other help for addicts](#)

Detroit Free Press

With a higher success rate than traditional probation programs, drug courts enjoy a great deal of support. They are a bipartisan darling, part of President Donald Trump's strategy to fight the opioid epidemic as well that of former President Barack Obama. Increases in federal funding mean the number of drug courts across the nation will increase.

And that means more opportunities for more addicts.

Minnesota

[Opioid epidemic is driving thousands of Minnesota children into foster care](#)

Minneapolis Star Tribune

The number of Minnesota children being removed from drug-addicted parents has reached crisis levels, flooding a state child welfare system that was already operating under heavy strains.

As the opioid epidemic has tightened its grip on the Upper Midwest, drug abuse by parents has emerged as the leading reason why children are taken from their parents. Children have been removed from their families because of parental drug abuse on more than 6,000 occasions from 2015 to 2017, according to [new data from the Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) (DHS).

Parents' substance abuse now accounts for nearly one of three children being removed from their homes statewide, compared to [just over one in 10 a decade ago](#).

Ohio

[Health department gets grant to combat opioid epidemic](#)

Fremont News Messenger

Sandusky County Health Department Director of Health and Planning Stacey Gibson said the grant will be used to tackle the trickle-down effect of the opioid problem.

"We are going to work with our partners for a needs assessment," Gibson said. "When we do our Community Health Assessment, that is giving us a snapshot of problems. This grant will help us look at local conditions."



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As partners like the juvenile court system and Sandusky County Department of Job and Family Services discuss challenges they face because of the epidemic, Gibson said the health department will be able to use the money to begin planning efforts against the drug issue.

Ohio

[ONU faculty members, county court official collaborate on drug addiction paper](#)

Ohio Northern University

Ohio Northern University faculty members Keith Durkin and Tristin Kilgallon, along with county court official Wade Melton, have authored a paper that examines the impact of the drug problem on Hardin County. The paper, “The perfect storm: The prevalence of co-occurring mental disorders in a sample of heroin users participating in a rural family drug court,” is scheduled for publication in the International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences.

Durkin is an ONU professor of sociology, Kilgallon is an ONU assistant professor of criminal justice, and Melton is director of programs for the Hardin County Court of Common Pleas, Juvenile Division.

Wisconsin

[Final report released by Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force](#)

urbanmilwaukee

The final report of the City-County Heroin, Opioid and Cocaine Task Force was released today and includes an attack plan to end the heroin, opioid, and cocaine epidemic that has spread across Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, and the region. The solutions offered include a detailed list of recommendations, ongoing prevention initiatives, and community resources including overdose emergency management guides and trauma response team handouts.

The task force has been hard at work during the past year to shape the policy recommendations and drew members from the Common Council, Health Department, Police Department, Fire Department, [Milwaukee County Circuit Court](#), Intergovernmental Relations, the County Executive’s office, healthcare or hospital systems, the [Medical Society of Milwaukee County](#), medical professionals, community organizations, and the general public.