

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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Connecticut

[Connecticut Attorney General William Tong commits \\$300 million from opioid settlement toward treatment, recovery and prevention](#)

Hartford Courant

The abatement stipulation covers a wide range of “opioid remediation” care and treatment programs, including funding the overdose-reversing medication naloxone, medication-assisted treatment, expansion of warm handoff programs (which aim to divert individuals away from the criminal justice system and toward treatment), as well as prevention programs, education, training and research, according to [Attorney General William] Tong.

As Tong noted, “the final decision on the actual appropriations is ultimately up to the legislature and Gov. Lamont, with input from the public and key stakeholders.”

The settlement requires the state to create an Opioid Recovery & Remediation Fund Advisory Council to solicit public input and make recommendations about the use of the funds, which will in turn be distributed by the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Indiana

[Worse before better: Addiction experts express concern, anticipation as overdose deaths skyrocket](#)

Indiana Lawyer

Indeed, while on the bench, Warren Circuit Judge Hunter Reece said he frequently sees substance abuse among Criminal, Juvenile, and Child in Need of Services [CHINS] cases. Reece presides over the Bi-County Accountability Court, a problem-solving drug court run out of the Fountain and Warren Circuit Courts.

As a result of the pandemic, Reece said he has seen firsthand an increase in drug use relapses and a decline in the stability of cases.

“In homes, we saw a 38% increase in CHINS cases in our county (in 2020), and substantially all of those have some tie to substance abuse from one or both parents. We also saw people with years of sobriety relapse during COVID-19 that were near graduation” from drug court, he said.

Reece said he also saw a rise in the number of petitions to revoke probation stemming from relapses. The trial court judge attributed that to a decline in treatment providers during the early stages of the pandemic, particularly in rural areas unaccustomed to providing — or receiving — virtual treatment.

“Many in our rural communities lack stable internet or don’t have the bandwidth to allow for virtual streaming,” Reece explained.

North Carolina

[County share of opioid settlement may fund drug enforcement alternatives](#)

Alamance News

During a recent meeting of Alamance County’s commissioners, a number of county officials openly endorsed proposals such as drug court and the county’s fledgling diversion center as alternatives to the criminal justice system for dealing with nonviolent drug users.

Among those who urged the commissioners to follow through with their plans for this center was Alamance County’s sheriff Terry Johnson. During Monday’s discussion, Johnson also lobbied in favor of a proposal to set up a drug court in Alamance County in order to push more low-level drug offenders into treatment.

Oregon

[Hopeless to hopeful: Oregon woman talks recovery, warns of fentanyl fears](#)

KATU

[Crystal] Long is thankful she has lived to help others and explained what has worked for her in her addiction recovery. She said she’s been involved in the [Washington County Drug Court program](#) since her arrest and has been receiving prescribed doses of Suboxone.

Suboxone is generically known as buprenorphine and [is] used to curb the cravings of an opioid addiction. The medication has been approved by the FDA and is administered by a doctor or health professional.

Buprenorphine is a form of [medication-assisted treatment](#) which utilizes medications in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies to treat substance use disorders and have been known to curb the cravings of an opioid, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration explained.

South Carolina

[Drug Court Program expansion to help low crime rates, officials say](#)

WBTW

[Fifteenth Circuit Solicitor Jimmy] Richardson said over 550 people have completed the Drug Court Program which has been life-changing for participants.

“Upon graduating, 89% of those people will not be arrested for another crime within 5 years, [and] 92% of those people will not be arrested for another crime within 1 year,” said Richardson.

Richardson said prison time alone will not solve drug and alcohol addiction. The opioid crisis has only gotten worse since the coronavirus pandemic.

South Carolina

[Horry drug treatment court expanding in hopes of helping more ‘break the cycle’](#)

Myrtle Beach Online

All programs will also now be available to offenders using medication-assisted treatment, which typically involves methadone or Suboxone, a popular brand of buprenorphine.

That announcement represents a stark change in mindset from just a few years ago, when Solicitor Richardson told The Sun News in 2018 that he worried allowing medication-assisted treatment would be “watering down” the program.

“Suboxone is like a life jacket, which is a good thing, but at some point, you need to take it off and learn to swim,” he said at the time.

Virginia

[Drug court coming to Madison and Orange](#)

NBC 29

Madison and Orange Counties are planning to create a drug court to help people recover from addiction.

The first piece of finalizing this is to hire a drug treatment court coordinator, which is open right now for people to apply to.

“It’s something we have been working on for a long time, the idea of something that we needed in Madison and we needed it in Orange,” Commonwealth Attorney for Madison County, Clarissa Berry said.

This comes as many people across Virginia and the country are struggling with opioid addictions.

Virginia[Shenandoah County supervisors hear pitch to establish a drug treatment court](#)

Northern Virginia Daily

[Judge Kevin Black, the presiding judge of the Shenandoah Circuit Court] stated that drug crimes now make up “probably 80% of my docket” and expressed “frustration” in knowing that sentencing drug addicts to jail time was doing nothing except “keeping them alive” and prolonging their return to drug abuse.

According to data that Cummings presented on Tuesday, the region including Shenandoah, Warren, Page, Frederick and Clarke counties and Winchester saw 53 fatal opioid overdoses last year (the previous high was 40 in 2017) and 19 this year as of July 16. There were also 202 reported non-fatal overdoses in 2020 and 131 so far in 2021.