

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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National

[FACT SHEET: President Biden's Safer America Plan](#)

White House

The Plan establishes a new \$15 billion over 10 years Accelerating Justice System Reform grant program that jurisdictions can use to advance strategies that will 1) prevent violent crime and/or 2) ease the burden on police officers so they do not have to respond to non-violent situations that may not merit police intervention. Doing so not only enhances public safety, but also delivers evidence-based criminal justice reform that advances racial equity. For example, jurisdictions may choose to use these funds to:

1. Expand drug courts that divert individuals charged with drug possession alone into mandatory treatment and harm reduction services instead of incarceration, as well as other alternative courts such as mental health courts and veterans courts;...

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[The Drug Crisis: Problems and Solutions for Local Policymakers](#)

Manhattan Institute

This paper, therefore, explores options for local policymakers to respond to the drug crisis. In particular, it considers six frequently discussed local-scale policies:

- Naloxone access and distribution
- Investing in treatment capacity
- Drug court programs
- Wastewater tracking
- Supervised consumption sites
- Drug market interventions

For each policy, this paper examines the evidence, offers estimates of costs, and provides caution where necessary. The overall goal is to give local policymakers a better understanding of what tools they have to more effectively tackle the other health crisis in their communities.

National**[Reshaping Court Systems: Issue Environments and the Establishment of Drug Courts](#)**

Justice System Journal

State court systems are being reshaped by the widespread adoption of drug courts. However, there has been limited attention to what drives the decision to create drug courts in the states. I link the establishment of drug courts to local issue environments found in each state that support proactive judicial and legal elites. I propose hypotheses that link the density of drug courts to judicial professionalization, state funding of courts, drug arrest rates, and levels of court consolidation. I test these hypotheses with panel data from 2009 to 2014. I find that states with more professional judiciaries and higher rates of drug arrests are more likely to adopt drug courts, that higher levels of court consolidation show a small negative effect and, finally, that higher levels of state funding for court systems do not have consistent effects. I conclude that there is support for (a) using the issue environments approach to analyze the establishment of drug courts and (b) considering issue environments when analyzing other community oriented changes in state court systems.

National**[The Drug Crisis Is Getting Worse. Local Leaders Can Fight Back.](#)**

Governing

To local leaders, urban and rural, the tide of drugs may feel insurmountable. Is there anything they can do to stem it? In fact, there are a number of evidence-based interventions that mayors, county executives, other local policymakers, judges and law enforcement can bring to bear on the drug crisis. As I detail in [a new Manhattan Institute brief](#), leaders on the front lines of the crisis do not need to wait for federal action. They can take steps right now to help those most at need in their communities.

Some of these are time-tested interventions but ones that still may not be used widely enough. Drug treatment services — long-term, medication-assisted, and accepting the risk of relapse — are the cornerstone of demand reduction. But of the 40 million Americans estimated to suffer from some kind of substance use disorder, only 4 million are receiving treatment. Local government is a major provider of treatment services, particularly in prisons and other institutions; stepping up spending can save lives. Similarly, drug courts — special courts to which offenders can be diverted, and which use both carrot and stick to help them get clean — have a track record of success, reducing enrollees' risk of recidivism.

Ohio[Drug courts cut down on jail numbers](#)

Tribune Chronicle

Felony drug courts in Mahoning and Trumbull counties are helping to steer some of those facing criminal prosecution on substance abuse-related charges into treatment, instead of prison.

The special courts are designed to help those facing lower-level felony drug crimes avoid state prison time, if they are willing to help themselves by going through extensive intervention programs designed to help them break away from the drug and alcohol [use] habits that led them to the court system.

Mahoning County's felony drug court has been in operation under Judge John Durkin for about 25 years.