



Opioids and the Courts News: August 23, 2019

National

[Kasich, Gee group to push opioid settlement toward hospitals](#)

Washington Post

West Virginia University President Gordon Gee and former Ohio Gov. John Kasich are creating a nonprofit that will fight to steer cash from any national opioid settlement to hospitals, rather than to local and state governments already sparring for control of the dollars.

Gee and Kasich say Citizens for Effective Opioid Treatment, a 501(c)4 organization announced Thursday, will educate policymakers and the public about the negative impact the opioid epidemic has had on health care infrastructure and advance health-related research solutions to the crisis.

“It’s an educational effort,” Gee said. “We want to help people understand that this is a crisis and that the caregivers — the hospitals, in particular — are really leading the charge in order to be able to both give care and solve the problem.”

National

[Ohio Balks at Endo, Allergan Opioid Deals as Trial Approaches](#)

Bloomberg

Ohio’s top law-enforcement official warned [Endo International Plc](#) and [Allergan Plc](#) he hasn’t agreed to back their proposals for settlements totaling about \$16 million to avoid trials in the first federal cases to be heard by juries over the public-health crisis caused by opioid painkillers.

Ohio Attorney General [Dave Yost](#) said in separate letters to the drug companies that their tentative deals with two counties in the state won’t resolve the state’s allegations that Endo and Allergan wrongfully marketed their opioid-based pain medicines.

“No settlement with any political subdivision relieves Endo of any liability to the state for any claim that Ohio has brought,” Yost said in the Aug. 20 letter. He added that the “nuisance value settlement” only addresses “municipal costs paid directly by the political subdivisions.”

Indiana

[A place for problem-solving](#)

The Republic

A new Bartholomew court is emphasizing problem-solving instead of punishment, and assistance instead of one-size-fits-all incarceration, for those seeking addiction recovery.



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The Bartholomew County Adult Drug Recovery Court is the newest of the county's three-problem solving courts designed to help and provide skills to high-risk and high-need nonviolent criminal offenders who have Substance Use Disorder.

While the new court has been in existence for three months, the benefits of having the new court may not become apparent for three to five years, said Bartholomew Circuit Court Judge Kelly Benjamin, who supervises the new court.

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"They have a brain that won't be working right for the next year-and-a-half," Benjamin said in regard to opioid addicts. "We have to retrain their brain and get them to lead a productive life — all at the same time."

Michigan

[Governor Whitmer Signs Executive Order Creating The Michigan Opioids Task Force](#)

CBS 62 Detroit

Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive order on Wednesday creating the Michigan Opioids Task Force, which will bring together leaders from across state government to tackle the opioid epidemic. Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive for the State of Michigan and chief deputy director for health for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, will serve as chair of the task force.

The task force will be charged with identifying the root causes of the opioid epidemic and implementing response actions to help Michiganders struggling with opioid addiction access the recovery services they need. The task force will also work to raise public awareness about the opioid epidemic and the resources available to those impacted by it.

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The Michigan Opioids Task Force will consist of Dr. Khaldun, Chief Justice Bridget McCormack or the chief justice's designee, and the directors or the directors' designees from the Departments of Health and Human Services, Attorney General; Licensing and Regulatory Affairs; Michigan State Police; Corrections; Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; Insurance and Financial Services; Military and Veterans Affairs; Labor and Economic Opportunity; and Education.

Ohio

[Documentary celebrates success, struggles of addiction recovery](#)

Columbus Dispatch

She was speaking specifically about her time in Marion County's Municipal MARC Court, also known as the Making Accountability and Recovery Count program, and her participation in "[Second Chances: One Year in Ohio's Drug Courts.](#)" an hour-long



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documentary produced by the Ohio Supreme Court. The film, which was shown publicly for the first time Thursday night at the Palace Theater in Marion — about an hour north of Columbus — featured 19 participants from Marion County’s drug court, and from drug courts in Hocking County in southeast Ohio and Medina in northeast Ohio.

[Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor](#) introduced the film to about 100 people at the Marion event. While she praised the work of the judges and the teams who run the 182 drug courts across the state, she especially credited those participants who voluntarily shared their journeys. She said they likely are saving lives with their honesty about the milestones and setbacks of recovery.

“In the film, each of you showed grit. You showed vulnerability. You showed commitment to a very difficult journey,” O’Connor said. “By choosing to share your stories — your joy and your pain — you are showing others a pathway out.”

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To watch the documentary, visit www.ohiochannel.org/video/second-chances-one-year-in-ohios-drug-courts.

Virginia

[Chesterfield one of 15 localities in U.S. selected for opioid treatment program for jail inmates](#)

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Chesterfield County has been selected as one of 15 localities in the U.S. — and the only one in Virginia — to participate in a national program backed by the U.S. Department of Justice to expand medication-assisted treatment for jail inmates who are addicted to opioids.

Five county officials representing the sheriff’s office, the courts, community corrections, and mental health services will receive scholarships to attend training sessions in Washington beginning in August and receive expert guidance on how to overcome barriers to providing opioid treatment for inmates — while they are incarcerated and after they are released. The county is sending two additional employees — from the Chesterfield Jail and Chesterfield Fire & EMS — on its own.

Although the experts will work with jail officials to create treatment guidelines, learn about addiction, and administer medications, they also will help develop a plan with Chesterfield health care officials to ensure inmates can access treatment once they are released.

Washington

[‘Those were the darkest days’: How key budget cuts fueled Washington’s opioid crisis](#)

Seattle Times





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“We knew prescription opioids were a huge problem, and we knew we were making lots of bad choices,” said state Rep. Eileen Cody, a trained nurse and chair of the House Health Care Committee, thinking back to those fraught, recession-era negotiations in Olympia. “It was a dismal time. We knew people would be hurt.”

Many lawmakers, including Cody, also understood how expensive those decisions would become in the long run because Washington’s analyses on the spiraling costs of untreated addiction — to the court, welfare and Medicaid systems — were so authoritative even the Congressional Budget Office used them.

Drug treatment could save Washington’s courts \$275 million, cut public emergency-room costs by 35 percent and effectively pay for itself, according to a raft of reports written between 2004 and 2009 by state economist David Mancuso. Yet his work sat unused as the economic crisis starved state budgets.