



Opioids and the Courts News: Mar. 22, 2019

National

[We're prescribing opioids less, but for longer](#)

Axios

How we prescribe opioids changed between 2006 and 2017 and varies state by state, according to [a new study](#) in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The bad news: The average duration per prescription and the prescribing rate of long-term opioid prescriptions increased.

- "Duration of use is the strongest predictor of opioid use disorder and overdose," the study's authors write. Every additional week that someone uses opioids, there's a 20% increased risk of developing an opioid use disorder or having an overdose.

The good news: Between 2006 and 2017, the amount of opioids prescribed per person decreased, as did the prescribing rate for high-dosage opioids, short-term opioid prescriptions, and extended-release and long-acting opioid formulations.

- High dosages and longer-acting formulations also increase a person's risk of becoming addicted or overdosing.
- The decline in short-term opioid prescriptions could mean that providers are encouraging other forms of pain management.

Illinois

[Will County Officials Explain Opioid Crisis To HHS Regional Director](#)

1340 WJOL

"There are signs of progress, but we are nowhere near where we need to be," he added. Chief Judge Richard Schoenstedt reported on the county's Vivitrol program for incarcerated individuals and the specialty courts in the 12th Judicial Circuit. States Attorney James Glasgow and Drug Court Coordinator Julie McCabe-Sterr talked about the success of the specialty courts and the Drug Court recovery homes.

Indiana

[Rush again urges \\$1 million boost to civil legal aid](#)

Indiana Lawyer

Further, the need for civil legal aid has been magnified by the nationwide opioid crisis, [Chief Justice Loretta Rush] said. In response, civil legal aid initiatives such as medical-legal partnerships have been developed to ensure Hoosiers with drug addictions can get the treatment they need while also getting help with the civil legal issues that have followed from their addictions.



Opioids and the Courts News: Mar. 22, 2019

Montana

[Opioid drug tax would fund treatment courts](#)

Great Falls Tribune

According to a study from the state public health and human services department, more than 700 Montanans have died from an opioid overdose since 2000.

“And the No. 1 recommendation from that study was that we need to invest in treatment courts,” said Rep. Zach Brown, D-Bozeman.

Brown is sponsoring [House Bill 654](#) on behalf of the Montana Department of Justice and the Attorney General’s office. The bill would put a 10 percent tax on the initial sale of opioids, a tax that’s paid by the seller, to fund Montana drug treatment courts.

State Attorney General Tim Fox has said addressing what he calls the “opioid epidemic” and substance abuse in Montana [is] one of his top priorities. HB 654 is a part of Fox’s Aid Montana Initiative, which was started in 2017 to address and treat substance abuse across the state.

Drug treatment courts use judicial oversight to help high-risk, highly addicted people get addiction treatment through frequent drug testing and different incentives.

Brown said there are approximately 30 courts in the state and that each court can usually only help rehabilitate about 30 people.

New York

[NY considers meds to treat opioid addiction in all lockups](#)

ABC News

More help for people like [Laura] Levine could be on the way, as lawmakers in New York are considering a measure to make medication-assisted treatment such as methadone or suboxone available to all prison and jail inmates struggling with opioid addiction.

States across the country are considering similar approaches amid research that shows that the drugs along with behavior therapy can help addicts reduce the withdrawal symptoms and cravings that drive many addicts to relapse.

Federal statistics suggest more than half of all inmates in state prisons nationwide have a substance abuse problem. New York officials say that percentage could be as high as 80 percent in state and local lockups, which at any given time have about 77,000 inmates.

Drug policy experts point to the success of a similar program in Rhode Island, which has seen a sharp drop in the number of former inmates who died of overdoses, from 26 in 2016 to nine last year.



Opioids and the Courts News: Mar. 22, 2019

Ohio

[Highland County drug court secures funding](#)

Hillsboro Times Gazette

Nearly \$100,000 in grant funds allocated to Highland County will provide the building blocks for a drug court in Hillsboro.

Judge Rocky Coss said this week that more than \$94,000 of a \$610,000 grant awarded to the Paint Valley Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board will pay for expenses associated with a specialized drug docket in Highland County Common Pleas Court.

As previously reported, drug courts — specialized dockets that offer defendants charged with drug crimes a chance at cleaning up their record through intensive reporting requirements and treatment — are growing in popularity around the state due to high success rates and a shift in the understanding of addiction.

Tennessee

[State's 1st Safe Baby Court Graduation Highlights Changed Lives, Reunited Families](#)

The Chattanooga

The way to stop that cycle, which has grown more powerful with the rise of the opioid epidemic, is to provide the parents of at-risk, younger children with resources that they can use to turn their lives around.

“The goal of Safe Baby Court is to give them a support system and give them the tools necessary so they will make lifelong changes that will affect not only their success but their families’ success,” [Coffee County Juvenile Court Magistrate Stacy Lynch] said.

Vermont

[Vermont state trooper revived after apparent drug exposure](#)

Associated Press

A Vermont State Police trooper who collapsed after apparently being exposed to an opioid-like drug during a traffic stop was revived by fellow troopers who administered the overdose-reversal drug Narcan, state police said Saturday.

Detectives are launching a full investigation into the incident and testing is underway to determine what substance made acting Sgt. Brett Flansburg ill.

...

Similar incidents have been reported in other parts of the country in which police officers overdose after accidentally coming into contact with opioid-based drugs.