

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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Illinois

[This Cook County judge gives convicts his cell number – if they complete addiction program](#)

Chicago Sun-Times

University of Chicago professor Harold Pollack, an expert on addiction, says of drug courts: “It’s not a miracle cure. It’s not the polio vaccine. But they are helpful when they are well-implemented.”

And they address addiction and help keep people from harming the community, Pollack says, “without locking someone up in a cage.”

He says it’s key that drug courts provide “evidence-informed” treatment, for instance, providing people addicted to opioids access to methadone or Suboxone, medications that can curb the desire for heroin or other illicit opioids.

“Abstinence-based programs are not the answer,” Pollack says.

Ohio

[Supreme Court Shares Steps to Fight Record Overdoses](#)

Court News Ohio

On the heels of the state’s deadliest year of overdoses in 2020, the [Supreme Court](#) of Ohio is leading the charge for local courts.

The Supreme Court’s [Specialized Docket Section](#) produced a [multi-faceted guide](#) providing best practices for Ohio courts to combat the record-setting number of overdoses that have occurred amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The resource offers strategies for how courts can assist individuals dealing with addiction. The material was approved by the Commission on Specialized Dockets on Dec. 16.

“During this very challenging period, we must do everything we can to help those who come before our courts struggling with substance use issues,” said [Chief Justice Maureen O’Connor](#). “The Court’s guide equips judges and their staffs with a series of options since there are so many different paths to recovery.”

Tennessee[Judge Lila Statom Seeks Greater Emphasis On Recovery Courts](#)

Chattanooga

Hamilton County General Sessions Court Judge Lila Statom, who helped establish and still presides over Hamilton County's misdemeanor Mental Health Court, and who also presides as substitute judge over Hamilton County's misdemeanor Drug Recovery Court, is renewing her call for expanded treatment options for those in the community, including in the criminal justice system, pointing to the dramatic rise in overdoses and overdose deaths in Tennessee. Citing data from the Tennessee Department of Health, overdose deaths from illicit drugs have almost doubled since 2016. Officials project the loss of life to drug overdoses in 2021 will rank as the worst yet, in what is proving to be one of the worst and most overlooked results of the pandemic.

Virginia[Deadly overdoses fell in 2021, but are still frequent](#)

Northern Virginia Daily

The task force also works closely with the Northern Shenandoah Valley Substance Abuse Coalition which oversees the intervention program and the Northwest Regional Adult Drug Treatment Court in Winchester, another alternative to incarceration.

Through October, the court, created in 2016, had served 84 defendants, graduated 37 and terminated 29. The intervention program, created in 2019, has served 41 clients through November and had one graduate and 16 terminations. Eight clients are scheduled to graduate between this month and the end of June.