

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

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## Weekly Review

January 22, 2021



### National

[Sheriffs: We can't 'arrest our way out of' the rural drug problem](#)

Agri-Pulse

In Erie County, New York, the first opioid crisis intervention court was established in 2017 to help drug addicts receive treatment and gain a support system to overcome their addiction. The special court is the only one of its kind in the U.S. and resides in a county with rural areas, but also suburban and urban areas surrounding Buffalo, New York, and its roughly 250,000 residents.

“We should treat this as a health crisis, first and foremost, and not a criminal justice crisis,” said District Attorney John Flynn.

Under the court’s operation, when an individual is arrested for possessing drugs, stealing, or any misdemeanor, they are evaluated by a medical provider to identify if they suffer from an opioid addiction. If so, their case is put on hold and they are sent to either an inpatient or outpatient treatment center. Each individual reports weekly to the judge to report on the status of their treatment. The judge then determines if the individual’s case is ready to be tried.

“And we either dismiss the charges, lower the charges, give them a plea deal or whatever it may be depending on the facts of the case, the severity of the case, and depending on how well this person went through the treatment,” Flynn said.