

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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Massachusetts

[Courts Receive \\$6 Million Federal Award to Expand Connections to Behavioral Health Treatment, Sober Housing and Transportation](#)

Massachusetts Court System

Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey, Trial Court Administrator Jonathan Williams, and Probation Commissioner Edward Dolan today announced that the Trial Court has received its largest federal grant ever – a \$6 million award from the Department of Justice to expand court-based connections for individuals at risk of overdose in 12 local courts that serve 62 communities.

The Massachusetts Trial Court is one of 11 states and the only court system to receive one of the \$6 million awards based on its submission to the federal COSSAP (Comprehensive Opiate, Stimulant and Substance Abuse Program) funding opportunity. The courts will connect at-risk individuals to behavioral health treatment, sober housing, and transportation services.

Project NORTH (Navigation Outreach Recovery Treatment and Hope) will offer enhanced services in courthouses located in 12 communities highly impacted by overdose deaths: Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Springfield, Taunton, and Worcester. The courts in these communities serve 2.7 million people in 62 municipalities across nine counties.

“We are very pleased by the confidence this federal award of \$6 million demonstrates in the Trial Court’s ability to greatly enhance service delivery and build upon the strong foundation we have established to serve community needs through specialty courts,” said Trial Court Chief Justice Carey.

North Dakota

[Judges address coronavirus, staffing needs during meeting with commissioners](#)

Minot Daily News

Drug addiction is a serious problem as well that judges deal with each day. Police have said there have been more than 80 overdoses this year and 13 overdose deaths, compared with 23 overdoses and three overdose deaths in 2019.

Judge [Gary] Lee said drug addiction can affect people of all ages, including people in their 60s who became addicted after being prescribed painkillers following a surgery.

Mountrail County Commissioner Joan Hollekim said there has also been an increase in drug-related incidents in Mountrail County, and she has heard that kids as young as grade schoolers have been addicted.

The Drug Court Program, which provides treatment and extended supervision to people with drug or alcohol addiction, has been expanded in the judicial district. There is a drug court program for adolescents and another one for adults. The Teen Drug Court Program has been expanded to Williston, said Judge Todd Cresap. An adult drug court program is now also available in Stanley.

Ohio

[Opioids and the pandemic: In the midst of isolation, there is hope](#)

Freshwater Cleveland

County court systems throughout Ohio are addressing the opioid crisis through specialty courts — also called specialized dockets or problem-solving courts — that help those charged with nonviolent crimes defeat their demons instead of sending them to jail or prison, thereby reducing recidivism.

Ohio has 261 specialized dockets, according to the Ohio Supreme Court, and more than 100 drug courts that deal specifically with addiction. There are also specialty courts for veterans, juveniles, and those with mental illnesses. Offenders receive long-term inpatient or outpatient treatment, sometimes for years, and often live in sober halfway or three-quarter houses after that.

In Franklin County, [Vanessa] Perkins was signed up for CATCH Court, which stands for Changing Actions To Change Habits. The court, established in 2009, rescues victims of human trafficking who might also suffer from drug addiction, trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

However, those affected by opioid addiction don't have to land in court to find help, and the state is looking for ways to make that help more easily obtainable. When Gov. Mike DeWine first took office in 2019, he launched [RecoveryOhio](#), an initiative meant to improve the state's approach to addiction and mental health treatments.