

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

July 1, 2022



National

[Supreme Court sides with doctors challenging their convictions in opioids 'pill mill' case](#)

CNN

The [Supreme Court](#) on Monday [ruled in favor of two doctors](#) who were convicted of prescribing dangerous opioids without valid medical justification in violation of federal law.

Lawyers for the doctors appealed their convictions, arguing that a jury should have been able to consider whether they reasonably believed that they were acting within professional boundaries. The government had argued such a standard was not necessary.

The court ruling for the doctors was unanimous, but the justices differed 6-3 on the legal rationale.

Arizona

[Arizona Supreme Court appoints fentanyl task force](#)

Herald/Review

The high court has asked members of the task force to come up with “a report and recommendations to the Arizona Judicial Council by December 31, 2022.”

At a minimum, this is what the AZSC is asking members of the task force to explore:

- Whether these drugs should be inspected and approved by designated court personnel before being allowed into a courthouse.
- Whether these packaged drugs must always remain in the exclusive possession of law enforcement personnel, except by approval of the court, and whether these drugs should be given to, or handled by, court personnel or others involved in judicial proceedings, including attorneys, witnesses, court clerks and jurors.
- The protocols that should be adopted for handling of the packaging for these drugs.

- Whether these drugs should remain in a courthouse or court-related facility during non-business hours. If court rules pertaining to the handling of exhibits prevent removal from the courthouse, policies on secure and safe storage should be established.
- Whether courthouse personnel should be trained to address possible exposure to fentanyl and other toxic evidence and to properly identify opioid toxicity; and identify what, if any, training is currently available.
- Whether naloxone (Narcan) should be kept in courthouses and other court-related facilities for emergencies and whether court administration or court security should be trained on the administration of naloxone in the event of opioid toxicity.

Ohio

[‘More successful than imagined’](#)

Times-Gazette

The program is an intensive four-phase drug intervention process for high-risk offenders lasting a minimum of 18 months. Drug courts exist around the country, and Highland County’s program, which is certified by the Supreme Court of Ohio, began in August of 2019.

“It’s been more successful than I even imagined it would be, and we are really seeing people make lasting changes,” said Highland County Probation Department Director of Programming and Clinical Services Tonya Sturgill, who serves as the drug court coordinator.

All of the drug court graduates are currently employed, two are in the process of buying their own home, and five have valid driver’s licenses...

Sturgill said opioids and methamphetamine are the most prevalent drugs that have plagued members of the drug court program.

Ohio

[Toledo organizations working together to meet goal of reducing opioid deaths by 40% in 3 years](#)

WTOL

Along with their goal of reducing opioid use by 40% over three years, the study promotes agencies and organizations to make an impact on the opiate problem in Lucas County.

These include the [Toledo Fire & Rescue Department](#), [Toledo Police Department](#), the [Lucas County Sheriff's Drug Abuse Response Team](#) (DART) and the [Lucas County Adult Drug Court](#).

Virginia

[Getting their lives back: Culpeper Drug Court participants start strong](#)

Culpeper Star-Exponent

Brandon started drug court in early March in connection with a 2020 drug possession charge of sedative and Xanax-like pills.

He admitted to abusing drugs after being found by police slumped over a steering wheel in the parking lot of a local business. Brandon told cops he had used the highly addictive opioid, OxyContin, according to court records.

He met requirements for referral to drug court and was assessed as being at high risk/high need, and to having moderate-to-severe substance abuse disorder. Brandon must abide by 15 requirements, including not possessing or being around people with drugs, random drug tests, and not owning or using a gun.