

Opioid-Related Conditions and the Courts

In the News: August 28, 2020



National

[Racial Disparity, Social Justice and Opioid Crisis Series of webinars offered this fall](#)

Case Western Reserve University

Co-hosted by CWRU School of Medicine and the CWRU Laura and Alvin Siegal Lifelong Learning Program, this webinar series brings together leading healthcare professionals, physicians, researchers, judges, social scientists, individuals with substance use disorders, criminal justice reform activists, policy experts, and diversity and inclusion advocates to address how the current opioid crisis is increasingly impacting communities of color, particularly Black Americans, who have been disproportionately stigmatized and incarcerated for substance use. It will showcase evidence-based research and data from diverse urban, state, and national contexts with the goal of providing ideas and strategies for broad-spectrum policy change across institutions.

Registration is free but required. [Visit the website](#) to review the full agenda and access registration links.

National

[The EEOC Releases Guidance on Legal Opioid Use and Reasonable Accommodations](#)

JDSupra

The first document, [“Use of Codeine, Oxycodone, and Other Opioids,”](#) makes it clear that employers cannot discriminate against those legally using medication—or anyone in treatment (including MAT) or in recovery from addiction.

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The second document, [“How Health Care Providers Can Help Current and Former Patients Who Have Used Opioids Stay Employed,”](#) gives medical providers guidance on the interactive process. It offers recommendations to assist medical professionals in providing the documentation necessary for employers to evaluate accommodation requests and to determine whether an employee is a safety risk.

National

[How the Pandemic Is a Boon to Recovering Addicts](#)

OZY

[Donna] Dibo is a graduate of Youngstown’s “drug court,” where nonviolent criminal offenders are able to avoid jail time by completing judicially-supervised substance-abuse rehabilitation. Regular appearances in drug court are required—but during lockdown, they happened via Zoom too, says Youngstown’s drug court coordinator, Amy Klumpp.

“The judge was in a T-shirt in his basement and he grew a beard during the pandemic,” she says, laughing, and adds that one addict made her required court appearance while lying in bed and smoking a cigarette.

Dan Pew, a Youngstown drug court graduate and recovering heroin addict, says he has also benefited during the pandemic.

“I’ve connected with way more people by seeing them on Zoom meetings,” he says. “This whole thing has been so double-edged; it’s great and it’s also horrible.”

Kentucky

[Health dept. using new program to help track overdose activity](#)

Times-Tribune

Agreements and protocols are being put together to implement a Quick Response Team that will also be able to embed mental health and peer supports within local law enforcement and courts.

“Often a person with substance use disorder ends up in a bit of a washing machine repeating cycles of drug use, overdose, trouble with the law, jail, court, emergency rooms,” added [Marcy Rein, Whitley County Health Department director]. “These interventions will engage people who use substances after an overdose or early in their engagement with law enforcement or the justice system to provide continuity while they access recovery resources. There’s an opportunity to get people out of the cycle so people recover and contribute to our community economically, socially, and spiritually.”

Massachusetts

[Fourth Wave of the Opioid Epidemic: Polysubstance Use](#)

Berkshire District Attorney's Office

Federal law enforcement and medical experts have warned local municipalities to prepare for “The Fourth Wave” of the opioid epidemic. “The Fourth Wave” signals the rise of stimulants like methamphetamine and cocaine alongside ever-present opioids. Every part of our community has grappled with the impacts of problem drug use.

New Jersey

[Gloucester County unveils 2 programs to help residents battling addiction](#)

NJ.com

In Road to Recovery, those charged with non-violent criminal offenses are given alternative options to jail and other penalties when they appear in participating municipal courts. The goal is to reduce recidivism by connecting addicted offenders with substance abuse recovery coaches, treatment providers, mental health support, and other services.

Offenders must plead guilty, then seek whatever treatment is recommended by the experts. Those who follow through could see charges dismissed. This effort is similar to the drug court program offered in state Superior Court.

New Jersey

[Morris County Prosecutor Fred Knapp: My office is a community leader](#)

Daily Record

We cannot arrest our way out of the opioid epidemic. The [Morris County Prosecutor's Office] has several community partners which connect those struggling with substance use to treatment resources. The Morris County Drug Court program was established to offer non-violent drug offenders treatment as opposed to incarceration and continues to be recognized throughout New Jersey as a model program for fostering responsibility and personal accountability. The program had 37 graduates in 2018 and 39 graduates in 2019. The retention rate over the past three years is 88.2%, which is one of the highest in the state.

South Dakota

[Life of addiction turned hopeful with help from community resources](#)

KNBN

“Once you start taking opioids though, they kinda grab a hold of you and they don’t let you go,” said Francis Kaufman, a father and recovering addict. “You end up partying at first, and then you take them just to feel normal and to be able to function.” Francis was the first graduate of the [Pennington County Drug Court](#). The couple [Francis and Andrea Kaufman] says as recovering addicts they take each day as it comes and hope their story can inspire others to reach out for help with addiction.

Tennessee

[International Overdose Awareness Day Sunday, August 30](#)

WJLE

The DeKalb Prevention Coalition in cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and the DeKalb County Recovery Court is calling on everyone to join in a special observance of International Overdose Awareness Day on Sunday, August 30.

This annual event will be held at the Gazebo of the Joe L. Evins Park across from the Smithville Fire Department. The program will feature guest speakers, LIVE music, a candlelight vigil, and free Narcan training. The community is encouraged to join in this effort to remember the lives impacted by the disease of addiction as well as their loved ones.

Washington, D.C.

[Report Finds D.C. Struggled to Provide Continuous Care for Drug Users Before, After and During Incarceration](#)

WAMU

A new audit found the D.C. government lacked continuity in providing substance use disorder care for people before, during, and after incarceration in the D.C. Jail over a January 2015 to September 2018 timeframe.

[The report](#) was conducted by the nonprofit Council for Court Excellence for the Office of the D.C. Auditor. It tracked the treatment of more than 4,600 individuals with substance use disorders who were also involved in the justice system. CCE looked at each person as they moved from receiving care in the community, through arrest and incarceration in the D.C. Jail, to release back to the community. It often followed the trajectory of treatment through a dizzying array of D.C. agencies, including the Departments of Behavioral Health and Health Care Finance, the Metropolitan Police Department, the Department of Corrections, and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.