

Opioids and the Courts

In the News: January 10, 2020



National

[Feds OK use of opioid funding toward other substances](#)

Herald-Dispatch

States will soon be able to utilize opioid funding from the federal government to address the resurgence of methamphetamine and cocaine.

The 2020 funding bill passed by Congress in December included Republican Ohio Sen. Rob Portman's Combating Meth and Cocaine Act. The bill expands the use of the State Opioid Response Grant funding to address rising use and overdose deaths attributed to the abuse of methamphetamine and cocaine.

"This is not just an opioid problem. This is an addiction problem," Portman said on the floor of the Senate on Dec. 19. "And addiction is a disease that must be treated like other diseases. And although we have made progress, we can't rest on our laurels, because when I talk to those on the front lines, as I did on Monday in Dayton with law enforcement — the sheriff was there for Montgomery County — but also to treatment providers, those who are in the trenches, talking to those who are recovering addicts who were there, they tell me about what's happening, which is that increasingly other drugs, including psychostimulants like crystal meth and cocaine, are making a horrible comeback in those communities."

National

[Pharmacies Say Prescribers Bear Opioid Crisis Responsibility](#)

Associated Press

Doctors and other healthcare practitioners who write prescriptions bear ultimate responsibility for improper distribution of opioids to patients, not pharmacists who are obliged to fill those prescriptions, a series of pharmacy chains argued in federal court. The filings, which were submitted Monday to the federal judge in Cleveland who has been overseeing the national opioid lawsuits, asked the judge to rule in the pharmacies' favor and reject claims brought by some Ohio counties. The judge has scheduled an October trial for claims against CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, HBC and Discount Drug Mart.

National[Foster Care Adoptions Reach Record High](#)

Pew/Stateline

“If I could wave a magic wand and get rid of substance abuse, there wouldn’t be enough work,” said David Gooding, a judge overseeing child welfare cases in the 4th Circuit Court of Florida.

“Parents come in using everything from methadone to heroin to methadone and heroin at the same time, to cocaine and marijuana.”

National[Lawyers for babies born after opioid exposure want Cleveland judge to approve class action against drug companies](#)

Cleveland.com

Attorneys representing the caretakers of babies born with opioids in their system asked a federal judge in Cleveland to grant them class-action status against drug companies they believe should pay for some of the long-term care of the children.

The attorneys asked U.S. District Judge Dan Polster Tuesday to bundle together claims made by guardians of the children against drug manufacturers, distributors and pharmacies. If granted, the move would also add more plaintiffs to a group that already consists of about 2,000 clients, attorney Marc Dann said.

The request provides another battleground against drug companies who have faced lawsuits from cities, counties and states in recent years that accuse them of fueling an epidemic that led to hundreds of thousands of deaths nationwide over the past two decades.

National[Implementation Strategies to Improve Access to and Use of MAT for Defendants in Opioid Courts](#)

U.S. National Library of Medicine

In response to the opioid crisis in New York State (NYS), where the proposed project will take place, the Unified Court System (UCS) developed a new treatment court model – the opioid court model (OCM) – designed around 10 practice guidelines to address the flaws of existing drug courts and reduce overdose (OD), opioid use disorder (OUD), and recidivism via rapid screening and linkage to medication for opioid use disorder

(MOUD). In 2018, NYS began to expand the OCM across NYS. Yet, given the innovation of the OCM, the exact barriers to implementation in disparate counties with a range of resources – and the strategies to overcome them – are largely unknown. The research team proposes to integrate evidence-based implementation strategies to refine and evaluate the Opioid Court Model Rigorous Implementation Science for Effectiveness (OCM RISE) intervention, an implementation intervention that will allow the OCM, as framed by the 10 practice guidelines, to be scaled up across NYS.

North Carolina

[DOJ awards WNC over \\$3.5 million in grants to fight opioids](#)

Citizen Times

The awards, as enumerated below, will be put toward comprehensive abuse site-based programs and/or drug court and treatment court for veterans, a December DOJ release said.

Buncombe County Health and Human Services - \$878,803

Rutherford County - \$600,000

Burke County - \$600,000

Appalachian District Health Department - \$551,257

Catawba County - \$500,000

Cleveland County Health Department - \$425,418