

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

## Weekly Review

April 2, 2021



### National

#### [George Floyd's Girlfriend Says Opioid Addiction Was a Struggle They Shared](#)

New York Times

“Our story, it’s a classic story of how many people get addicted to opioids,” [Courteney Ross] said. “We both struggled from chronic pain. Mine was in my neck and his was in his back.”

After three days of emotional testimony from bystanders who witnessed Mr. Floyd’s death in police custody last May, prosecutors on Thursday nudged the trial forward to one of the central aspects of the case: Mr. Floyd’s drug use.

### National

#### [Beth Connolly on the Opioid Epidemic](#)

CSPAN

[Pew Charitable Trusts' Beth Connolly](#) discussed recent developments in the nation’s opioid epidemic.

People were definitely isolated, the stress had people turned – had people turning to substances. People were also using substances alone. And we know that for an opioid overdose, that the use of naloxone can bring someone back to life. But, you need to be around people in order to have it administered, and so this was also a problem. People who may have been using drugs alone. You talk about the contamination. It is much more potent than your prescription opioid or heroin, and a little bit it – of it in a drug supply can have an adverse effect and cause death. So, these two things really have been working on increasing the number of overdoses that we are seeing.

### National

#### [Senator Rob Portman: We can’t wait for the pandemic to end to fight the opioid overdose surge](#)

Roll Call: Opinion

More than 40 states have reported an increase in opioid-related deaths during the pandemic, [the American Medical Association reports](#). And more than 81,000 people died of drug overdoses between May 2019 and May 2020 – the highest 12-month total in our nation’s history – [according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Looking specifically at opioids, the CDC says fentanyl overdose deaths [rose nearly 40 percent](#) over that period, the largest spike of any drug. This deadly, synthetic drug knows no ZIP code and is devastating individuals and families all across the country. Fentanyl has become a significant problem in my home state of Ohio, where state troopers [seized a total of 129 pounds of fentanyl](#) in 2020 – enough to kill more than 60 million people.

## **Kentucky/Indiana**

### [Overdose deaths soar in Kentucky, Indiana during pandemic](#)

WDRB

Deaths from overdoses in Indiana and Kentucky increased even more than the national average. Indiana went up by 30.5%, and Kentucky was up 43.9%, according to the data.

During the time period the data was collected, 2,126 deaths in Indiana were attributed to overdoses. In Kentucky, it was 1,885.

“Trust being one of the top, significant issues in any early recovery for any alcoholic or addict, it’s one of the best things to build that trust is come around and see other people and get that reconfirmation,” said Shannon Gray, programs manager with [The Healing Place](#). “We’re talking isolation in homes. With families, some people are not working.”

Some of those factors – and fewer systems in place to increase accountability – could help explain the dramatic increase.

## **Maine**

### [‘I was begging for a way out.’ The drug and overdose crisis continues to rise in Maine](#)

News Center Maine

While Bangor offers peer-based recovery support, the city doesn’t have enough clinical or residential treatment facilities, he said.

[Carrie] Grondin is set to graduate from her recovery ‘Drug Court’ program in a few months. She has not used meth or alcohol since December 2019.

“I was begging for a way out and I didn’t know how to get out of it. This program has been a blessing to me. It’s given me a way out of addiction,” said Grondin. “People hear addiction and they are just so disgusted about it, and a lot of people don’t understand it, and I think that’s a big part of the problem. There’s a lack of compassion.”

### West Virginia

#### [Overdose Deaths Soar In West Virginia Amid Pandemic](#)

WMKY

Drug overdose deaths are up more than 40% in West Virginia, an increase likely driven by the coronavirus pandemic, according to [preliminary data](#) released this month by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Between August 2019 and August 2020, 1,147 West Virginians fatally overdosed on drugs, compared to 816 during the same 12-month period the year before, the CDC report shows.

West Virginia's increase was higher than all but four states – Louisiana, Kentucky, Colorado, and South Carolina – and the District of Columbia. Nationwide, overdose deaths have jumped by 25%, according to the CDC's provisional data.