



Opioids and the Courts News: May 23, 2018

National

[Can This Small Town Lead America in Fighting the Opioid Crisis?](#)

OZY

In 2013, Greenfield residents formed the Opioid Task Force, and its members have since won significant victories, including the launch of a 64-bed treatment center a mile from downtown, and an upending of the way the local jail administers corrections. They tackled the easiest interventions first, such as educating the public about the problem and improving access to naloxone, the medication that reverses overdoses, says John Merrigan, a Task Force co-founder and the county's register of probate. These are steps that many communities have undertaken; Greenfield, though, began to confront some of the deeper issues underlying drug use, including the fact that overdose deaths are more common among the underemployed and unemployed.

National

[Lawyer who forced Big Tobacco to pay billions is suing Big Pharma](#)

NBC News

The lawyer who took down Big Tobacco 20 years ago has another intimidating foe in his sights. His opponent this time — Big Pharma.

In the 1990s, as Mississippi's attorney general, Mike Moore launched a lawsuit against 13 tobacco companies that eventually resulted in a \$246 billion, 50-state settlement. His state lawsuit had become a swarm of suits backed by dozens of states and elite private attorneys, and then a victory that Moore proudly called the "most historic public health achievement in history."

He's now using what he learned fighting the tobacco industry to take on pharmaceutical companies, who [he says are responsible for the nation's opioid epidemic](#).

National

[Revolving Door of Despair: Drugs Land More Women Behind Bars](#)

Associated Press

The opioid crisis is putting more women behind bars across the U.S., tearing apart families and squeezing communities that lack treatment programs and permanent solutions. In one Tenn. county jail, most female inmates have long-term addiction problems.



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Colorado

[Opioids are in the Vail Valley, but abuse hasn't yet reached crisis levels](#)

Vail Daily News

Judge Peter Dunkleman runs the drug court in Eagle County. He told the group that there is a problem in the county.

"Heroin is here, and it's part of the opioid epidemic," he said.

Larson said that's true. But, she added, trying to keep people from abusing prescriptions is an important first step.

That's "where we can move the needle," she said.

Illinois

[Specialty court for first-time opioid offenders planned in DuPage as 'crisis reaches beyond what many people realize'](#)

Chicago Tribune

A new specialty court to handle first-time opioid offenders is one of several ways DuPage County officials proposed Tuesday to step up efforts to deal with what they said is becoming an emergency situation.

Members of the county's Heroin Opioid Prevention and Education task force, speaking at a press conference in the county board chambers, announced five specific strategies they will pursue to be funded with \$100,000 in the county budget.

"This crisis reaches beyond what many people realize," DuPage County Health Department Executive Director Karen Ayala said. "Current estimates are that 200 people a day die from opioid-related overdoses. It easily eclipses other public health emergencies in recent times, including HIV and drunk driving deaths."

Indiana

[Task force has ideas to battle opioids](#)

Fort Wayne Journal Gazette

On the positive side, Allen County physicians are writing fewer opioid prescriptions. From 2013 to 2017 prescriptions for controlled substances declined by two-thirds, the report states. It also points to the community's commitment, breadth of current treatment services, drug court, the needle exchange program and access to the overdose antidote Narcan as bright spots.



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Ohio

[Doug Oplinger: Ohioans offer solutions to opioid crisis](#)

Your Voice Ohio

Drug courts: Some counties have become highly effective at using seamless services through drug courts to gain treatment in lieu of a criminal record. We saw differences in death rates between two similar counties where one had medically assisted treatment through drug court and the other did not. In a state that routinely ranks among the top four for death rates, should there be an 88-county policy?

