

Opioid-Related News and the Courts

Weekly Review

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National

[States tighten criminal penalties for fentanyl](#)

Washington Times

More states are tightening criminal penalties for [fentanyl](#) to combat the opioid crisis, sparking pushback from some activists and health officials who call the measures racist and ineffective.

[Fentanyl](#), a powerful synthetic opioid, has fueled a decade-long surge in overdose deaths that worsened during COVID-19 restrictions. More than 100,000 Americans die from drug overdoses annually.

In legal form, doctors prescribe [fentanyl](#) as a painkiller that is 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Counterfeit pills from China have increasingly flooded U.S. streets since 2013, along with illicit [fentanyl](#) powder manufactured in Chinese and Mexican drug labs with Chinese chemicals.

At least 28 states have passed [fentanyl](#) criminalization laws, according to the Legislative Analysis and Public Policy Association which researches drug safety policies.

California

[How the opioid epidemic devastated San Francisco and contributed to a potential economic freefall](#)

San Francisco Gazette

Treatment and rehabilitation services

Although the city has spent millions of dollars to end the drug crisis, San Francisco has long had a severe shortage of treatment beds. Last month, leaders took to extreme measures by proposing a controversial new tactic – requiring those who are arrested for drug use or possession to attend a specialized court offering treatment services.

Those who face their second drug use or possession arrest will be sent to ‘drug court,’ giving drug users services like job training programs, mental health resources, and rehabilitation options.

Law enforcement officers were sent to highly drug-fueled areas like Tenderloin, Civic Center, and SoMa neighborhoods earlier this month, with the goal of making more arrests and offering treatment services.

Washington

[Nonprofit wants Everett law that bans addict aid centers from using 1st floor downtown reversed, city says no](#)

Snohomish Tribune

A nonprofit that provides substance use disorder counseling would like the city to reverse its ban on having such services on the first floor of buildings in downtown. The city won't because more social services doesn't fit with the vision for downtown, a city official said to the group.

The Center for Human Services sought to purchase 2716 Colby Ave., seated between Romio's and the Colby Diner, because it's close to the courthouse, so clients and counselors could walk to drug court sessions.