

Opioid-Related Conditions and the Courts

In the News: August 14, 2020



National

[Economists conclude opioid crisis responsible for millions of children living apart from parents](#)

University of Notre Dame

Nearly 500,000 people in the U.S. during the past 20 years [have died from an opioid overdose](#). Millions of others — many of them parents — are using, incarcerated or in drug rehabilitation programs. While the drug crisis has had profound impacts on adults, there has been relatively little research into its effects on the children of drug users. A recent study by University of Notre Dame economists [Kasey Buckles](#), [William Evans](#) and [Ethan Lieber](#) is one of the first to examine these impacts.

In their study, [released](#) by the National Bureau of Economic Research, the professors — all affiliated with Notre Dame's Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) — show that greater exposure to the opioid crisis increases the chance that a child's mother or father is absent from the household and increases the likelihood that he or she lives in a household headed by a grandparent. The authors estimate that in 2015 1.5 million children (up to 16 years old) were living apart from at least one biological parent, 300,000 were living away from both parents and roughly half a million were living in a household headed by a grandparent as a result of the crisis.

Arkansas

[Drug overdoses skyrocket in Fort Smith during COVID-19](#)

Hot Springs Village Voice

COVID-19 also affected clients in the criminal justice system, [recovery coach Austin Coats] said.

“I’ve got people who are in treatment right now who are either here or in drug court or probation or parolees who because of the virus were not able to report to their probation officers anymore because the offices were shut down, which in turn means they were not being drug tested, which means there was no accountability there,” Coats said.

Sebastian County Circuit Judge Stephen Tabor said drug testing has resumed. But drug court members can still only get counseling through Zoom meetings, he said.

Kentucky

[Kentucky continues fight against drug overdose deaths](#)

Lebanon Enterprise

A report released by the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy indicates lethal overdoses among Kentucky residents totaled 1,316 in 2019. Unfortunately, this data indicates a five percent increase of drug overdose deaths since 2018.

[Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy] also joined with the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC) at the University of Kentucky College of Public Health, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the Justice and Public Safety to create www.findhelpnowky.org, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The website provides a vital link for Kentucky health care providers, court officials, families and individuals seeking options for substance abuse treatment and recovery. It offers real-time information about available space in treatment programs, and guides users to the right type of treatment for their needs. The site provides a search engine for drug treatment, helping users locate treatment providers based on location, facility type and category of treatment needed.

Louisiana

[‘It was, quite frankly, alarming.’ Parts of St. Tammany Parish see huge spike in overdose calls](#)
WDSU

Geno Morris is a peer support specialist with the team. He is also in recovery... “We go to the emergency rooms. We have phone calls from families. We have phone calls from clients. We have phone calls from the court systems,” said Morris. “We work with whoever needs our resources.”

Pennsylvania

[Inside some Pennsylvania rehabs, ‘it’s like COVID doesn’t exist’](#)

WHYY

Several individuals in treatment told Spotlight PA they were reluctant to raise concerns publicly or file complaints in anticipation of exactly this kind of response. They worried people wouldn’t believe them, staff and management at the facilities might retaliate, and judges or probation officers would misconstrue their fears as an attempt to avoid court-mandated treatment.

“I wish I could choose not to go in person and just do telehealth,” said one client who attends outpatient services at a Gaudenzia facility in Norristown as part of a drug treatment court mandate. “But I don’t want to get sanctioned by the court for not doing what they’re asking.”

Tennessee

[‘Every day is a blessing’ | Roane State graduate celebrates a decade of recovery by earning her degree](#)

WBIR

Thrower said she was able to go to a halfway house, be in a drug court program and receive peer recovery specialist training.

She started working for the Scott County recovery court where she helped others find their path to recovery while continuing her own.

West Virginia

[WV Family Drug Treatment Court Celebrates First Graduates](#)

Associated Press

A couple who lost custody of a young daughter through their drug addictions have become the first graduates of a family treatment court in West Virginia.

Sabrina Ward and Matt Blackshire attended a ceremony with their daughter, family and friends Tuesday in Boone County, the state Supreme Court said in a news release.

“I never dreamed I would be where I am today,” Ward said. “I am very thankful and blessed. Family Treatment Court has changed my life for the better.”