

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

## Weekly Review

October 7, 2022



### National

#### [Opinion - We have a way to end the opioid epidemic, but not the will](#)

Washington Post

I knew when I was giving a talk about the opioid epidemic to the Indiana Sheriffs' Association in 2020 that it wasn't going well. When I suggested that law enforcement officers divert arrestees with substance use disorders to treatment centers instead of jail, the sheriffs looked more disgusted than interested. When I proposed that prisoners be offered medications such as methadone or buprenorphine on-site to treat their opioid dependence — the gold standard of care — one sheriff hissed, "They're clean when they leave my jail."

### National

#### [Opinion - We can stop opioid addiction before it starts](#)

Washington Post

My life was saved by treatment I received in a Maine drug court 16 years ago. I would not have been eligible for diversion because of the seriousness of my charges. Instead of jail, I was given the opportunity to participate in one of the more than 4,000 treatment courts nationwide and address my opioid use disorder through treatment, counseling and recovery support.

At the time I participated in drug court, medications were not widely available and still viewed with some skepticism. Today, treatment courts are leading the advancement of medication in the justice system. A recent [Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment study](#) found that nearly three-quarters of all treatment courts now offer all Food and Drug Administration-approved medications for opioid use disorder, and 90 percent offer buprenorphine and/or methadone.

### Iowa

#### [Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller: Drug Courts are Smart Way to Use Opioid Settlement Money](#)

River Cities' Reader

Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller congratulated Clay and Dickinson counties for planning to use opioid settlement money to help launch an adult drug treatment court.

“This is a great model for other counties in using settlement money,” AG Miller said. “Drug courts can accomplish so many important goals, including reducing our prison population and costs and, most important, saving lives.”

### Maine

#### [Responding to Questions from the Committee to Study Court-Ordered Treatment for Substance Use](#)

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Drug Court Program - Maine’s Treatment and Recovery Courts (TRCs) offer treatment services to participants whose criminogenic risks and treatment needs are high, producing a likelihood of recidivism under standard supervision. Treatment and Recovery Courts employ a non-adversarial courtroom atmosphere in which a dedicated multidisciplinary team works toward a common goal of breaking the cycle of recidivism caused by underlying substance use disorder or mental health issues. Participants remain in the community while being supervised by a case manager and, if on probation, a probation officer. TRCs are located statewide with seven operating with the District Court System.

### Massachusetts

#### [Innovative court program helps people navigate addiction services](#)

Commonwealth Magazine

CAPE COD DEFENSE attorney Susan Wenzel had a client with mental health and substance use issues who needed help handling both problems and had no health insurance. His criminal case was still in progress, so he had no access to court-ordered therapy.

Wenzel called Rick Palingo, a recovery support navigator who works in Barnstable area courts. “He’s like a magic wand almost,” Wenzel said. “He can find anything, he knows everything.” She says Palingo told her client where to go to enroll in MassHealth, then had a list of inpatient and outpatient programs that could meet her client’s needs.

Palingo is part of Project NORTH, which stands for Navigation, Outreach, Recovery, Treatment, and Hope. It is an innovative Trial Court program funded by a three-year, \$6 million grant from the US Department of Justice, which connects court-involved individuals with people who can help them navigate the recovery process. The program also provides concrete support – a free ride from court to a service, and up to six months’ rent in a sober home. Navigators work for health care agencies, not the court, so they are bound by medical confidentiality laws.

### Ohio

#### [Continuous Progress, Treatment Courts Among Chief Justice's Achievements](#)

##### Court News Ohio

Chief Justice O'Connor observed that the opioid epidemic has been one of the great public health crises the nation has faced. Even before the rise of opioid addiction, Ohio courts were adapting to handle drug and alcohol addiction and mental health issues among those entering the criminal justice system.

Ohio is a pioneer in specialized dockets, the chief justice noted, and today there are more than 263 specialized dockets in the state, dedicated to specific types of offenses or offenders whose criminal behavior stems from a struggle with addiction and/or mental health issues.

Specialized dockets are dedicated to specific types of offenses or offenders and use a combination of holding offenders accountable while also addressing the underlying causes of criminal behavior.

### Oregon

#### [Reducing barriers to substance use treatment in Douglas County](#)

##### News-Review

We also provide treatment services for the Drug Court and Mental Health Court programs as part of an interdisciplinary team that provides the substance use and behavioral treatment and guidance needed to guide a client to graduation from treatment court and into a new life.