

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

## Weekly Review

December 9, 2022



### Iowa

#### [Opioid board to consider how to combat deadly addiction in Des Moines County](#)

The Hawk Eye

“The problem I’ve always seen with our drug court is you’re going in a day late and \$10 short, because you’re getting people who are only going into drug court so they can avoid prison,” [Des Moines County Attorney Lisa Schaefer] said. “I have always wanted to see us have a drug court at the associate court level when we’re seeing people first come in with possession of heroin, possession of methamphetamine, possession of whatever it is, and then we’re also seeing that accompanied by a myriad of thefts. They’re stealing to support their habit, but I would like to see us getting them a lot sooner. Then by the time we get them in drug court, the ones I’ve seen are so far gone in their addiction, drug court’s just a detour on the way to where they’re actually going.”

### Oklahoma

#### [‘I want to help my people:’ Tribal nations in Oklahoma focus on mental health treatment](#)

KOSU

Tribal healing to wellness courts

In Indian Country, tribal healing to wellness courts are providing another alternative to incarceration.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, there are four of these culturally sensitive courts operating in Oklahoma including the Cherokee Nation, Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, Citizen Potawatomi Nation and the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma. They evolved from the drug court system and provide an intervention for people who would have gone to prison for addiction or crimes that stemmed from untreated mental health issues.

Wellness courts incorporate tribal teachings and practices while helping people get mental health care and other wraparound services like assistance with housing, transportation, and employment.

### Oregon

#### [Oregon's Addiction Care Rollout Puts Peers In A Precarious Position](#)

The Lund Report

The frustration is evident statewide, and especially in Malheur County.

“We got all this money that came into our community, and you know what it gave us? More peers, more syringe exchanges, more Narcan,” [Sarah Poe, director of the Malheur County Health Department] said, referring to an opioid overdose-reversing drug. These services are critical, she said, but on their own, “they’re not a full solution. And we really, really, really needed a detox facility.”

Poe wondered aloud why the state isn’t taking steps to ensure each region has the basic building blocks of a functioning treatment system in place: a detox center for withdrawal management, an overdose prevention coordinator, sufficient residential treatment, recovery housing, and other baseline necessities.

### Pennsylvania

#### [Former inmate talks about lifesaving recovery](#)

The Daily Item

The Northumberland County Drug Treatment Court is one of six treatment courts in Northumberland County. At the common pleas level, Northumberland County under Judge Robert B. Sacavage established a drug treatment court in 2005, DUI and behavioral health were introduced soon after, veterans court was introduced in 2011, and family court was established in 2018. In 2016, the veteran treatment court was introduced at the magistrate level.

“Before I got sentenced to drug court, that experience in jail was the most dehumanizing experience of my life,” said [Stacy] Parisella, who has been clean and sober since Dec. 5, 2011. “I have done and experienced things because of my own choices and addiction and trying to survive that I thought were already dehumanizing, that didn’t touch that experience in jail. That had a big impact on me in deciding I can’t ever do that again.”

“No matter the terribleness I went through in jail and no matter how horrible it was, my experience with treatment court was the most amazing, supportive, understanding, non-judgmental and empathetic experience I ever had. I don’t know how to ever repay that except doing the next right thing, to continue to be the person they showed me how to be.”

### Virginia

#### [Culpeper mapping use of opioid abatement settlement funds](#)

##### Culpeper Star-Exponent

A portion of the money could also be used for support of the new Culpeper Drug Court. Whereas the state DOC had allocated funding for a drug court coordinator, that money recently went away, [County Administrator John Egertson] said.

An opioid abatement spending plan proposal will be developed and brought before the board public safety committee in the near future. Culpeper County could also be eligible for additional funding to tackle the problem through grants anticipated to be distributed by the state authority. Egertson said the application process would be announced in January.

### West Virginia

#### [Court of Second Chances?](#)

##### West Virginia Public Broadcasting

In West Virginia, there are nearly 50 specialized court programs designed to help teens and adults kick their drug addictions. Drug courts divert people away from incarceration into a rigorous, court-monitored treatment program. They are intense experiences, some more than a year long. Participants are drug tested regularly and require monitoring devices.

Graduation rates across the country show success rates from 29 percent to more than 60 percent. There are many supporters within the justice system, but critics say drug courts only work with the easiest, first-time offenders and don't take violent offenders or sex offenders. Some drug courts require a guilty plea before someone can participate, which can limit a person's options if they don't make it through the program.