

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

## Weekly Review

March 24, 2023



### National

#### [AMERICA'S OPIOID ECOSYSTEM: How Leveraging System Interactions Can Help Curb Addiction, Overdose, and Other Harms](#)

Rand

CHAPTER FOUR Specialty Treatment System for Opioid Use Disorders.

CHAPTER SIX Criminal Legal System

### National

#### [The Opioid Crisis: The War on Drugs Is Over. Long Live the War on Drugs](#)

Annual Review of Criminology

A closer examination of media coverage, the response of law enforcement and policy makers, the legislative record, and the availability of proven, high-quality treatments for substance abuse casts doubt on claims that the country pivoted toward public health and harm-reduction strategies to address the opioid crisis because its victims were disproportionately white people. Law enforcement solutions directed at people who use and sell street drugs continue to far outpace public health and harm-reduction strategies. Government support for expanding access to proven treatments for opioid use disorder that save and rebuild lives remains paltry given the scale of this public health catastrophe. And although the rhetoric has been somewhat more sympathetic, at times it rivals the excesses of the crack era. The article examines the various phases of the opioid crisis as they have unfolded over the past 25 years; related geographic and racial shifts in overdose fatalities with each new phase; media coverage of the crisis; the federal government's response, including by the US Congress and presidents from George H.W. Bush to Joe Biden; punitive developments at the state and local levels; and the country's poor record on prevention and making effective treatment widely available for people with substance use disorder.

### National

#### [‘We can’t incarcerate our way out of the problem’: Why some judges favor drug courts’ treatment-based approach](#)

Juvenile Justice Information Exchange

In Ohio, Warren County Court of Common Pleas Judge Robert Peeler, a former prosecutor who created one of the state's earliest drug courts, said they work and are a good idea.

“I realized that this is not a question of, ‘Did you do it or not, but can you stop?’ I know we can’t incarcerate our way out of the problem because these are not hardened criminals,” Peeler said of the mainly low-level, non-violent offenders accepted into drug courts. “They have a disease.”

### New York

#### [Drug court enrollment has plummeted after changes to criminal justice laws](#)

Albany Times Union

State data obtained by the Times Union show usage of drug courts has dropped nearly in half since sweeping changes were made in 2019 to the state’s bail and pre-trial discovery laws.

Those changes to the criminal justice statutes have contributed to an unintended consequence: significantly fewer individuals are faced with choosing between incarceration or entering a drug court rehabilitation program. That drop in the number of individuals entering drug courts came after New York’s criminal justice statutes were overhauled three years ago. While access to drug or other treatment courts have always posed hurdles for public defenders and prosecutors, court watchers note a more fundamental change has disrupted the system.

### Washington

#### [‘I came in here kicking and screaming’: WA debates a ‘stick’ for the drug crisis](#)

Seattle Times

Can people in the throes of drug addiction be coerced into going to treatment?

Gregory Scott says he was.

“I came in here kicking and screaming,” Scott said this past week in a King County courtroom.

The county’s Drug Court had its first in-person graduation ceremony in three years since the pandemic hit. I wanted to observe the court in action to weigh whether there’s a possible path out of the region’s spiraling drug crisis — using the justice system.

“My hustle is I would steal copper to buy more drugs,” said Scott, 57.