

# Opioid-Related News and the Courts

## Weekly Review

March 18, 2022



### National

#### [HHS Announces Funding for Substance Use Treatment and Prevention Programs: Grants to Focus on Increasing Access to Medication-Assisted Treatment for People Battling Opioid Use Disorder](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), announced two grant programs totaling \$25.6 million that will expand access to medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder and prevent the misuse of prescription drugs.

The **Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs (SPF Rx)** grant program provides funds for state agencies, territories, and tribal entities that have completed a Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant plan or a similar state plan to target prescription drug misuse. The grant program will raise awareness about the dangers of sharing medications, fake or counterfeit pills sold online, and over prescribing. The grant will fund a total of \$3 million over five years for up to six grantees.

The **Medication-Assisted Treatment – Prescription Drug and Opioid Addiction (MAT-PDOA)** grant program provides resources to help expand and enhance access to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD). It will help increase the number of individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) receiving MOUD and decrease illicit opioid use and prescription opioid misuse. The grant will fund a total of \$22.6 million over 5 years for up to 30 grantees. No less than \$11 million will be awarded to Native American tribes, tribal organizations, or consortia.

### Indiana

#### [Miami County confronts ‘perfect storm’ in the opioid epidemic](#)

Chronicle-Tribune

Miami County Circuit Court Judge Tim Spahr told the Tribune in January that “stakeholders” in the county first approached him about a drug court shortly after he took office in 2012.

“We started what we called the Community Based Treatment Program,” he recalled. “It wasn’t a state certified program at that point.”

Unsure of whether it would work and whether the county could bear the administrative costs of the fully certified program, they opted to start slow.

“We wanted to see how it would go,” he said.

After three years, they paused, took a look at their numbers, he recalled, “We said, ‘OK, we are not seeing as many people get (re-)arrested.’”

They continued on, achieving state certification in January 2019.

Since the start of the full program, he said, they have admitted 41 people into the program. Eight have been terminated, he said, and 14 have graduated.

## **New Jersey**

### [Increase in N.J. drug overdose numbers suggests more needs to be done](#)

WHYY

[Governor Phil Murphy] along with Acting Attorney General Matt Platkin announced Friday that [New Jersey will receive a \\$641 million share of a \\$26 billion nationwide settlement](#) with New Brunswick-based Johnson & Johnson and three drug distributors. The state sued the companies for misleading customers about their opioid products being less addictive than competitors. They said the money will go towards funding efforts to fight the opioid epidemic, including establishing drug court programs on the municipal level.

## **Pennsylvania**

### [Two local court systems named in lawsuit against PA court system](#)

WJAC

The Department of Justice sent a letter to Jefferson County common pleas court judge John Foradora asking about the court's policy of denying the use of prescribed opiate-based medication.

The DOJ says Judge Foradora vacated the administrative order that day.

[A complainant] Mosey said, “It was like a ton of bricks had just fell off,” when the court mandate was lifted.

“It was a relief to say the least.”

Fast forward to this past February. The DOJ filed a [13-page lawsuit](#) against the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania, accusing it of violating Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, citing a number of courts within the commonwealth either prohibited or limited the use of medication that was prescribed to people suffering from OUD.

Geoff Moulton, the court administrator of Pennsylvania responded to the lawsuit with a letter, saying in part, “...please accept this letter as the firm representation and assurance of the Pennsylvania courts’ commitment to comply fully with the

requirements of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act – and its implementing regulations.”

He went on to add that the PA court system “currently meets, and will continue to satisfy, the requirements of title II relating to treatments courts and permitting prescribed medication for treatment of opioid use disorder.”

## **Virginia**

### [Front Royal council to consider drug court cost](#)

Northern Virginia Daily

Councilman E. Scott Lloyd raised a concern about using local money to fund the initiative. Lloyd noted that Virginia anticipates receiving money through its share of the proceeds from a settlement in a lawsuit against prescription drug companies over the opioid/opiate addiction crisis.

“When I worked at the (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services, before COVID, ... one of the four top priorities for the entire ... \$1.3-trillion operation was for opiate addiction and they were pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into opiate addiction and responses to that,” Lloyd recalled. “And I’m just thinking, especially with the announcement of the additional settlement monies that are coming to the state, I’m just wondering (about) the extent of which we need to be outlaying any money at all. I would think that it’s readily available.”