



National Judicial Opioid Task Force

Confronting a crisis, promoting solutions

Task Force Co-Chairs

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Introduction

The misuse of opioids is affecting the administration of justice across the United States. State courts handle 95% of all litigation in the country and are positioned to play a crucial role in combatting the opioid epidemic.

To address the issue and promote solutions, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) established the National Judicial Opioid Task Force (NJOTF) in August 2017.

The NJOTF will make recommendations to courts at every level to support the Judiciary and help individuals make a successful recovery.

The Past Year

August 2017

Task Force established

September 2017

Executive Committee appointed and workgroups established

- Children and Families
- Civil and Criminal Justice
- Collaboration and Education

September 2017

State Justice Institute awards Task Force a \$700,000 grant

October 2017

Survey distributed to CCJ & COSCA members to determine epidemic related needs

November 2017

Executive Committee convenes in Arlington, VA for organizational meeting

January 2018

Executive Committee convenes in Las Vegas, NV to discuss court-based interventions

March 2018

NCSC launches "Opioids and the Courts" webpage, announces Task Force full membership, and workgroups begin monthly remote meetings

April 2018

NJOTF webpage launches, five principles finalized

June 2018

Full task force convenes in Indianapolis, IN to learn about existing efforts, identify areas of collaboration, and refine task force deliverables

Task Force Members



Members of the National Judicial Opioid Task Force convened in Indianapolis in June 2018. The Task Force includes representatives from 24 states, most of whom are pictured above.

Five NJOTF Principles

1. A Comprehensive Approach

The justice system should deliver solutions and be equipped to address the harms of substance use disorders for every person at every intersection of the justice system. The courts should, in partnership with others, employ a broad range of evidence-based interventions.

2. All Hands On Deck

Judges should maximize their roles as conveners and educators by bringing together government agencies and community stakeholders.

3. Individualized Treatment and Services

Courts should use validated screening and assessment instruments to ensure that treatment services target individual needs. Treatment should not be limited to opioid use disorder, but include all substance use, mental health, and trauma.

4. Protecting Children and Supporting Families

Courts should adopt strategies to expedite the safe and stable placement of children. Interventions should be widely-available and incorporate treatment strategies with recovery supports.

5. Making a Difference and Measuring Success

The courts should use data-driven decision-making approaches and establish robust data collection to objectively assess performance.

Three Work Groups

Three work groups will address critical topics and produce practical materials such as fact sheets, webinars, videos, “TedTalk” style events, bench cards, interactive maps, and other resources for judges, court personnel, and justice system stakeholders.

Children and Families Work Group

Purpose: To ensure that the complex needs of families with substance use problems are met through interdisciplinary and collaborative services. Support should be available to children and parents, including:

- Medication-assisted-treatment for parents involved in the child welfare system.
- Pre-petition family wellness courts to prevent entry into foster care for children.
- Processes for emergency inter-state placements of children with a focus on the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children.
- Prevention services to reduce disproportionate minority representation in the juvenile justice system.

Civil and Criminal Justice Work Group

Purpose: To ensure an understanding of addiction and to develop/implement state court standards for collaboration and integration between treatment professionals and the criminal justice system, including:

- Tools and programs to establish interdisciplinary treatment/care teams.
- Screening and assessment tools to effectively match needs with services.
- Guidance on the safe handling of fentanyl in the courtroom.
- Naloxone access and use in courthouses.
- Use of involuntary commitment, guardianships, and conservatorships for those with substance use disorders.

Collaboration and Education Work Group

Purpose: To foster collaboration among justice system stakeholders ensuring a comprehensive approach to educate judges and to address substance use disorders, including:

- Judicial Branch inclusion and role in state and local opioid task forces.
- Partnerships among state, tribal, and federal courts for resource and information sharing.
- Curriculum and resources for judge and stakeholder training.
- Catalogue of best/promising practices of court-related programs.
- An online resource: “Treatment Toolkit for Courts.”



Children feel the effects

90 percent increase

in prevalence of Alcohol or Drug Use as a Contributing Factor for Reason of Child Removal

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

Opioid Epidemic 2016 Numbers



504 billion
in economic costs

11.5 million
people misused
prescription opioids



2.1 million
people had an
opioid use disorder

948,000
people used heroin



42,429
deaths nationally
due to opioid use

17,087
deaths nationally from
prescribed opioids



116
deaths daily from
opioid overdoses

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*The Criminal Justice System is the
single-largest source of referral
to substance abuse treatment.*

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration -

Special Courts and Efforts

1. Opioid Intervention Court

The Buffalo, NY Opioid Intervention Court is a triage program where participants are linked with medication-assisted-treatment and/or behavioral health treatment within hours of arrest.

2. Early Childhood Courts

Florida's Early Childhood Courts address child welfare cases involving children under the age of three to facilitate monthly reviews, child-parent psychotherapy, frequent parent-child contact, and family team meetings.

3. Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams

Kentucky's Sobriety Treatment and Recovery Teams (START) combine best practices in courts, child welfare, treatment, and peer recovery to help parents achieve recovery and maintain custody of their children.

4. Teleservices for Treatment, Supervision and Court

Montana's courts are utilizing technology to bridge the gap between those in need and available services including remote court appearances, remote training for court and treatment staff, access to treatment assessments and services, court date and other reminders, and community supervision services.

5. Recovery Oriented Compliance Court Strategy

Tennessee and Indiana courts are infusing drug court components into all civil and criminal dockets to serve individuals that have a lower risk of recidivism yet high needs related to substance use/mental health disorder.

**National Center for State Courts,
National Judicial Opioid Task Force**
ncsc.org

State Justice Institute
sji.gov

