

PRESS RELEASE

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American Judges Association

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“Voice of the Judiciary” issues statement on funding for Treatment Courts

Williamsburg, VA - The American Judges Association (AJA), representing over 1500 Judge Members from across the U.S. and Canada, applauds the recent historic federal funding of \$165 million to support the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) for Drug Courts grants and Drug and Veteran Treatment Courts in their efforts to fight the national opioid addiction epidemic. This Court funding comes at a time when deaths from opioid overdoses have jumped and the opioid addiction epidemic is at a crisis point.

For the Courts, the importance of Medically Assisted Treatment (MAT) to fight the opioid problem is increasingly bringing focus toward expanding methadone, buprenorphine and Vivitrol treatment. Many national and international professional bodies consider MAT an evidence-based best practice for treating opioid dependence.

In a 2014 survey of all state and territorial drug court coordinators in the U.S., opioids were ranked as the primary substance of abuse in 20% of adult urban drug courts and 30% of rural and suburban drug courts.

Veterans Treatment Courts have increased 14-fold from 2009 to 2014. According to NADCP there are a total of 350 problem-solving courts offering specialized services for military veterans or active duty personnel in 2014, including 266 state, territorial and federal VTCs as well as specialized tracks for veterans in already existing traditional drug courts or mental health courts.

Many of our Judge members preside in these Drug Treatment Courts and our Association has signed onto a Resolution supporting NADCP’s 10 Guiding Principles for Drug/DWI Courts as well as publishing a White paper on the topic of the role of the judge in these courts. For more information about the AJA go to <http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/>.