

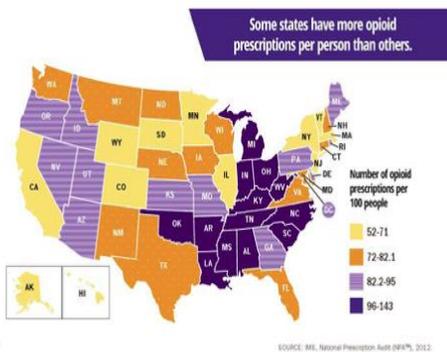
A Few Miles East

An glimpse at rural American handling of criminal justice addiction cases

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Grand Traverse County

- In the 5 year period analyzed, Grand Traverse County had 60 percent of its drug cases ending in lasting criminal convictions.
- “In Grand Traverse County,” a defense attorney states, “drug cases end with more convictions and longer sentences overall.”
- “Grand Traverse County’s mentality of ‘tough on crime’ ultimately globally harms the community they’re set to protect.”

Emmet County

- Michael is a patient on Suboxone, prescribed by a licensed MD who is Suboxone certified. He has not used heroin for 9 months.
- Michael is convicted of drunk driving.
- Michael’s probation officer orders Michael off Suboxone and Ativan.
- MD writes a letter to the judge advising against taking Michael off the Suboxone and Ativan.
- Michael does not discontinue Suboxone, and is then ordered to three consecutive weekend detainers for “obstruction of justice.”
- Michael states that he is so happy that he was allowed to do weekends, so he can keep his job, that he is “just going to leave it alone.”
- Michael states in counseling that he is fearful relapse is inevitable because of the courts pressure to quit Suboxone, which he is already anticipating will put him in a state of craving, or withdrawal. He is certainly already experiencing increased anxiety as a result.

Leelanau County

- Opiate Epidemic summit planning group
- Culture of support amongst corrections staff, and sheriff’s deputies
- 47 percent of its drug cases ended in conviction
Many misdemeanor marijuana cases result in deferred sentences and clean public records.
- “As a prosecutor, probably our greatest tool is discretion,” the chief prosecutor said. “With a stroke of a pen, you can very much affect people’s lives and their futures.”

Benzie (BZE) County

- About 33 percent of the county’s drug cases concluded with narcotics convictions.
- Prescribed psychiatric medications allowed in county jail
- Monthly public provider partner meetings for integrated case and issue discussion
- BZE Drug Court Recovery Board
- First county in Michigan to implement naloxone kits in police cars, in a response to the community’s outcry about a spate of heroin deaths

BZE continued

- “Fast’s multiple chances were a function of where Fast lived, as well as who she is, as different counties approach addiction and drug charges with sometimes wildly divergent tactics.”
- An analysis found about 66 percent of Benzie County drug cases concluded with dismissed charges or, more often, no public record.
- One local attorney who defends clients in these counties stated that Benzie County authorities will “literally bend over backwards” to avoid convictions for young people – a good thing.

Benzie Recovery Court Foundation Board

- Judge Nancy Kida
- Licensed mental health clinician, and harm reduction expert (20+ years in harm reduction, and traditional substance abuse fields)
- An exceptional Probation Officer
- Social worker & parent of an opiate addict on probation
- Local Community Mental Health Jail Diversion Provider
