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*Remembering our  
friend and  
colleague*



## The Honorable Judge Duane Slone

January 19, 1963 – August 25, 2024

With heavy hearts, we mourn the sudden loss of our friend and colleague, the Honorable Judge Duane Slone, Circuit Court Judge in the Fourth Judicial District of Tennessee. Judge Slone was a founding member of the Rural Justice Collaborative and has served on the Advisory Council since its inception. Judge Slone leaves a legacy of compassion, innovation, and unwavering dedication to justice that will continue to inspire and impact lives for generations to come. As a Circuit Court Judge in Tennessee's Fourth Judicial District, he embodied the highest ideals of public service, using his position to uphold the law and transform lives and communities.

Judge Slone's visionary approach to addressing the opioid crisis set him apart as a true pioneer in the field of judicial innovation. Recognizing that addiction required healing rather than punishment, he co-founded his judicial district's Recovery Court, offering guidance and second chances to those struggling to overcome addiction. His empathy and belief in human potential helped countless individuals reclaim their lives and become productive members of society.

Judge Slone's expertise and passion extended far beyond local boundaries. His leadership in state and national initiatives earned him well-deserved recognition, including the prestigious William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. This honor, presented by the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, speaks volumes about the respect and admiration Judge Slone earned among his peers.

Judge Slone served as Chairman of the eight-state Appalachian-Midwest Regional Judicial Opioid Initiative and Chairman of the Substance Misuse & Addiction Resources for Tennessee "SMART" Justice Network and the Tennessee Judicial Conference Problem Solving Court Committee. He was a founding member of the "SMART" Policy Network. Additionally, Judge Slone was a member of the National Institute of Drug Addiction JCOIN Practitioner Advisory Board, the SAMHSA Advisory Committee for Women's Services, the Advisory Board of the National Rx and Illicit Drugs Summit, and the National SUD Strategic Advisory Panel Criminal Justice Workgroup.

Perhaps Judge Slone's greatest gift was his ability to see the humanity in every person who entered his courtroom. He understood true justice often meant offering a helping hand rather than a harsh sentence. His compassionate approach, particularly toward women and children affected by addiction, saved and improved countless lives. See the testimony below from the Tennessee Courts [website](#):

*"Judge Slone helped me in my opioid crisis. I've been clean and sober because of his love to help someone like me. Don't get me wrong, if he thinks you're gonna die, he will put you in jail. May he rest in peace, and I send prayers to his family. It's gonna take a big shoe to fill his place in this community."*

-Amanda Christie, Met him while I was in trouble

Judge Duane Slone's passing leaves a void in the hearts of all who knew him. From all of us at the Rural Justice Collaborative, we extend our heartfelt condolences and sorrow to his family, friends, and colleagues for this significant loss. May his example guide us toward a more just and compassionate society.

# RESEARCH & REPORTS

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF A RURAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT-INITIATED BUPRENORPHINE PROGRAM IN THE MOUNTAIN WEST: A STUDY PROTOCOL**

Opioid-related overdose morbidity and mortality continue to impact rural communities significantly. Nationwide, emergency departments (EDs) have seen an increase in opioid use disorder (OUD)-related visits compared to other substance use disorders (SUD). ED-initiated buprenorphine is associated with increased treatment engagement at 30 days. However, few studies have assessed the implementation of rural ED-initiated buprenorphine, which has unique implementation barriers. This protocol outlines the rationale and methods of a rural ED-initiated buprenorphine program implementation study.

## **LINKAGE FACILITATION FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER IN CRIMINAL LEGAL SYSTEM CONTEXTS: A PRIMER FOR RESEARCHERS, CLINICIANS, AND LEGAL PRACTITIONERS**

People with opioid use disorder (OUD) in the United States are significantly vulnerable to contact with the criminal legal system (CLS). In CLS settings, evidence-based treatment for OUD is variable and often secondary to punitive approaches. Linkage facilitation at every touch point along the CLS Sequential Intercept Model can potentially redirect persons with OUD into recovery-oriented care systems, increase evidence-based OUD treatment connections, and reduce CLS re-exposure risk. This paper explores the state of the science on linkage facilitation across the varied CLS contexts. Following the CLS Sequential Intercept Model, the specific contexts include:

- Community services
- Police encounters
- The courts (pre- and post-disposition)
- Incarceration (pre-trial detention, jail, and prison)
- Reentry (from jails, prisons, and unified systems)
- Community supervision (probation and parole)

# PROGRAM

## 'LIFE-CHANGING SUPPORT': IN RURAL NORTH CAROLINA, A PROGRAM FOR TREATMENT OF SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER THROUGH PREGNANCY AND BEYOND OFFERS CARE AND COUNTERS STIGMA

[Project CARA](#) — Care that Advocates Respect/Resilience/Recovery for All — is an Asheville, North Carolina-based program that supports pregnant and parenting people with substance use disorders. Within the [Mountain Area Health Education Center's](#) obstetrics and gynecology department, Project CARA offers medical, substance use, and behavioral health care and other support services in one place.

# WEBINARS

## SUCCESSFUL PRE-TRIAL STRATEGIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES: SMALL-TOWN SOLUTIONS TO SOLVE BIG-TIME PROBLEMS

During this event, representatives from the Criminal Justice Innovation Lab at the University of North Carolina and Court and Pre-trial Services for Cass County, Indiana, spoke about the needs of rural criminal justice systems, strategies at the pre-trial phase that are built for rural communities, and resources and funding opportunities provided by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.



## IMPLEMENTING HARM REDUCTION INITIATIVES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Addiction Technology Transfer Center (ATTC) Network is a multidisciplinary resource for addiction treatment and recovery services professionals. The Mountain Plains ATTC is co-located at the University of North Dakota and the University of Nevada, Reno. It serves stakeholders residing in HHS Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming). This presentation offers strategies and opportunities for implementing harm reduction initiatives and overcoming barriers in rural communities. (The presentation begins at minute 6:11)

# ARTICLES

## THE RURAL UTAH COMMUNITY AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE FENTANYL EPIDEMIC

The rate of opioid-related deaths in Carbon County, Utah, and its two neighboring counties, Grand and Emery, overwhelmingly exceeds the state's death rate. Utah's overall rate is 18.3 deaths per 100,000 people, but these counties on the highway from Mexico to Salt Lake City see a death rate of 42.7 per 100,000 people, according to the most recent data. This article is the first in a series analyzing the problem and seeking potential solutions. The authors interviewed more than 20 people connected to the crisis, including those in recovery, former fentanyl distributors, law enforcement officials, and recovery specialists.



*Allison Jackson, who is recovering from an opioid addiction, wipes a tear during a music activity at USARA Price Recovery Community Center in Price on Wednesday, July 10, 2024. Jeffrey D. Allred, Deseret News*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL SERIES: USING EVIDENCE TO ENHANCE HEALTH SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS USING DRUGS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Treatment for individuals with SUDs in rural areas often falls on existing primary care providers and hospitals; however, as population density decreases, so does the availability of virtually all healthcare facilities. The articles in this special series, "Substance Use Care in Rural Communities," showcase empirical research to improve health outcomes for individuals using drugs in rural communities. The articles propose multiple solutions to rural challenges, such as using technology to remediate transportation barriers, enhance clinical workflows and treatment processes, and expand clinician training.

# PODCASTS



## RURAL ROADS - THE RCORPODCAST. #71: NALOXBOXES IN RURAL SETTINGS

In this episode, Sophie Spiess and Emily Loertscher from Marshfield Clinic in Wisconsin discuss their program involving NaloxBoxes in rural settings. Sophie and Emily share insights into the Naloxone-based project, discussing the implementation of NaloxBoxes in various counties and schools. They talk about community responses, challenges faced, and the importance of sustainability in such initiatives.

## RTI EPISODE 294 | JUST OUTREACH TEAMS FOR SUBSTANCE USE IN RURAL NEVADA

To address the needs of justice-involved individuals with a substance use disorder, there are several opportunities for intervention, including pre-arrest, at the time of a behavioral health crisis, and post-arrest, once an individual has already been incarcerated. In rural Nevada, the Office of the Attorney General has pioneered two types of outreach teams which help support individuals at both points in their involvement with the criminal justice system. Listen along as Dr. Kerns, Dr. Snider, and DJ discuss how Mobile Outreach Safety Teams, or MOST, and Forensic Assessment Service Triage Teams, or FASTT, operate, the state and local impact of these programs, and how grantees have overcome implementation barriers. (Discussion begins at minute 3:00)

# RESOURCE

## RURAL JUSTICE COLLABORATIVE

Rural communities face unique challenges that impact their ability to deliver fair and equitable justice. Despite these challenges, rural communities rely on their many strengths to address the needs of their residents.

The National Center for State Courts, in partnership with Rulo Strategies, launched the [Rural Justice Collaborative \(RJC\)](#) to showcase the strengths of rural communities and highlight the cross-sector collaboration that is a hallmark of rural justice systems.

The work under the RJC is supported by a cross-sector advisory council composed of rural judges along with additional stakeholders in the justice, child welfare, and behavioral health systems. The advisory council guides and identifies innovative programs and practices.

## SAMHSA'S GAINS CENTER IS NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR SEQUENTIAL INTERCEPT MODEL MAPPING WORKSHOPS

SAMHSA's GAINS Center is accepting applications from communities interested in Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Mapping Workshops. SIM Mapping Workshops are designed to bring together a local, cross-system, multidisciplinary group from a particular jurisdiction (typically a county) to facilitate collaboration and to identify and discuss ways in which barriers between the criminal justice and behavioral health systems can be reduced through the development of integrated local strategic action plans.

Available SIM Mapping Workshops Include:

- [Traditional SIM Mapping Workshops](#)
- [SIM Mapping Workshop to Develop Comprehensive, Community-wide Strategic Plans for Addressing Opioid and Other Substance Use](#)

SAMHSA's GAINS Center will provide the SIM Workshops free of charge to selected applicants between February and August 2025.

Applications are due by October 18, 2024. An [informational webinar](#) will be held on September 23, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. ET.