



# PRESS RELEASE

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New York State  
Unified Court System

Hon. Craig J. Doran  
Administrative Judge  
Seventh Judicial District

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## Rochester Launches Innovative Court Initiative to Address Opioid Crisis

**Rochester, New York** – As part of the New York State court system’s ongoing efforts to address the State’s opioid crisis, Seventh Judicial District Administrative Judge Craig J. Doran and Supervising Judge of the Rochester Treatment Courts John L. DeMarco today joined local officials and key stakeholders to announce the start-up of a specialized part of the nationally-recognized Rochester Treatment Courts tailored to eligible defendants at high risk of opioid overdose.

The Opioid Stabilization Part (OSP) will provide immediate intervention, treatment and supervision to high-risk defendants with severe opioid use disorders. Cases considered appropriate for the OSP will be flagged for screening upon the consent of the defendant’s attorney. Defendants who opt to undergo screening and are found to be at high risk will have the case proceed in the OSP, with the District Attorney suspending prosecution of the case during the stabilization process. Once clinically determined to be stabilized and no longer at risk of overdose, the defendant may be referred to drug treatment court (for longer-term treatment), judicial diversion or other adjudication.

The OSP is a collaboration of the New York State court system and Monroe County’s District Attorney’s Office, Public Defender’s Office and Sheriff’s Office. The new court is supported in part by a \$1.8 million federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration by way of the office of County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo.

The Buffalo Opioid Treatment Intervention Court, which launched in Spring 2017, was the first of these pioneering court parts in the nation. There are several other opioid intervention courts now operating in New York and more in the planning stages, with the statewide

implementation of this court model a foremost priority of Chief Judge Janet DiFiore and Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks.

“This innovative court model strives to more effectively respond to the special needs of high-risk offenders suffering from opioid use disorders, helping avert overdoses and bringing greater safety and stability to our communities. I am thankful to our justice system partners in Monroe County and beyond for bringing the OSP to fruition and look forward to the launch of more such court parts throughout the Seventh Judicial District and New York State as we continue our fight against this devastating epidemic,” said Administrative Judge Doran.

“Quite simply, this court is being established to save human lives. As the opioid crisis has taken a major toll on our community, this specialized part will provide us with an unprecedented opportunity to provide access to those defendants at highest risk of overdose, with immediate access to substance abuse treatment and other needs,” said Supervising Judge DeMarco.

“For people battling an opioid addiction, the hours immediately following an arrest can make the difference between life and death. The OSP will provide vital help during that critical window of time so users can get medically stabilized, begin treatment and stay alive. We look forward to working with the OSP to provide treatment and prevention services to individuals struggling with drug addiction who break the law,” said Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley.

“Today’s announcement of the OSP represents another step forward for Monroe County’s Opioid Action Plan that will benefit residents and families struggling with opioid use disorder. With a \$1.8 grant secured by Monroe County, this new initiative will help prevent overdoses and give residents the opportunity to live fulfilling, productive lives in long-term recovery,” said Monroe County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo

“The addition of the OSP to the already successful Rochester Treatment Courts will provide even greater hope to those struggling with the battle of addiction. As we face perhaps the greatest epidemic of our time, New York remains at the forefront of the drug court initiative, the roots of which can be traced back to Monroe County with the advent of the first drug treatment court in Rochester in 1995. Thank you to all who collaborated to make this effort a reality, especially the Honorable Justices Craig Doran and John DeMarco for your continuous support,” said Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter.

The OSP will begin operation next week. Rochester City Court Judge Caroline Morrison will preside over the new part.

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