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For Immediate Release

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Kentucky Court of Justice to launch RESTORE initiative to help courts address opioid epidemic

Public and media invited to news conference at State Capitol, April 11, 2019, 1:30 p.m. EDT



FRANKFORT, Ky. — The Kentucky Court of Justice is kicking off a new initiative to help judges, circuit court clerks and court personnel further address Kentucky’s opioid epidemic. The RESTORE initiative will launch with a news conference on Thursday, April 11, 2019, at 1:30 p.m. EDT. The public and media are invited to attend this event, which will take place in the Supreme Courtroom, State Capitol, 2nd Floor, 700 Capital Ave., Frankfort.

RESTORE stands for Responsive Education to Support Treatment in Opioid Recovery Efforts.

“The opioid epidemic has placed a severe strain on the courts and substance use disorders have taken a toll on individuals and families throughout the commonwealth,” Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr. said. “We want to give our judges, circuit court clerks and court staff the training and resources they need to effectively handle opioid-related cases. By working together, we can make a difference for Kentuckians affected by substance use disorders.”

The Administrative Office of the Courts is carrying out the RESTORE initiative as a subrecipient of a grant from the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#). The grant was awarded to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services as part of the collaborative [Kentucky Opioid Response Effort](#).

Chief Justice Minton said the opioid epidemic has hit Kentucky particularly hard, with the state’s overdose death rates among the top in the nation. “The good news is that Kentucky’s outcomes are finally beginning to improve,” he said. “Opioid-related drug charges are declining, opioid-related overdose deaths are down and access to medication assisted treatment is up. The bad news is that there were still nearly 8,000 heroin-related charges and more than 1,000 overdose deaths related to opioids in the state last year. We still have much work to do.”

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After the news conference on April 11, Kentucky judges and court staff will be invited to attend two one-day summits in 2019, which will be offered in each of Kentucky's seven appellate districts. The RESTORE Leadership Team is responsible for planning these events. The team consists of nine judges from Circuit, Family and District courts; a circuit court clerk; and representatives from the AOC Departments of Family & Juvenile Services, Pretrial Services and Specialty Courts.

Speakers

Those speaking at the news conference will be:

- Chief Justice of Kentucky John D. Minton Jr.
- Wendy Morris, Commissioner, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities, Cabinet for Health and Family Services
- Van Ingram, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, Justice & Public Safety Cabinet
- Family Court Judge Janie McKenzie-Wells, 24th Judicial Circuit
- Nancy Hale, President/CEO, Operation UNITE
- Shannon Adams, Medical Surgical Unit Director, Saint Joseph-London and Drug Court Graduate

About the Administrative Office of the Courts

The AOC is the operations arm for the Kentucky Court of Justice and supports the activities of more than 3,400 state court employees and 406 elected justices, judges and circuit court clerks. As the fiscal agent for the state court system, the AOC also executes the Judicial Branch budget.

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