



COUNTY NEWS

Maine County Commissioners Association Newsletter

In this issue:

National Association of Counties

- Suing "Big Pharma" Over Opioid Painkillers
- NACo Membership Benefits
- Nationwide Deferred Comp Program
- Live Healthy Discount Programs
- NACo's Legislative Priorities
- Stepping Up Webinar

Suing 'Big Pharma'?

If your county plans to sue over opioid painkillers, assume you're going to trial. As the White House declared widespread opioid addiction a nationwide public health emergency Thursday, members of NACo's Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC)

gathered to hear from a panel of experts about suing opioid manufacturers and distributors. About 100 county officials and others are tackling some of their most challenging issues during a three-day LUCC symposium in Salt Lake County. "It's important we get out there and understand what this addiction is and how we as leaders in our communities have to combat it," said Larry Johnson, LUCC chair and commissioner, DeKalb County, Georgia. One part of the arsenal for counties? Going to court. Counties, cities and states are suing drug manufacturers for fraud, negligence and public nuisance. "Where the political and regulatory processes have failed, the courts are sometimes the last resort for trying to get some kind of compensation," said Teneille Ruth Brown J.D., professor of law, at the University of Utah, who moderated Thursday's discussion. Harriet Ryan, a reporter for the Los Angeles Times, who is part of a team at the newspaper reporting on the opioid crisis, said that drug manufacturers have armed themselves with information about alleged illicit activity involving their prescription opioids, but have done little to stop it, in order to continue to make profits. The opioid crisis "reveals so much that's broken in our system and so many failures," Brown said. "Failures in regulatory law, failures in our response, failures in regulating doctors and pharmaceutical companies. There isn't one corner of society that is immune." *~Read the full article by Mary Ann Barton here.*



NACo membership is an investment in your county's future because the association works to ensure that counties have the resources, skills and support needed to successfully lead their communities into the future. Your county's membership with NACo saves you and your county time and money and helps you grow professionally.

- NACo's Programs and Services offer your county unique opportunities to help your residents, your employees and your county meet the needs of the future.
- NACo's advocacy represents you and your county in Washington, DC and speaks with one voice representing the interests of the nation's counties and their residents.
- Education and personal development helps you better serve your county by giving you countless opportunities to learn and grow through conferences, webinars, forums, and other networking opportunities.
- Research materials and data provide information about counties and what they do including demographics, sample ordinances and model county programs, as well as data of all kind.
- Communications allow you to stay current about essential information. NACo can save you time and provide you with exactly what you need through the NACo web site, County News, blog posts, podcasts, issue specific newsletters, and social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. *~Please click here to see the membership guide.*



NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy. Each year, NACo's Board of Directors adopts the association's federal policy priorities, which help develop NACo's advocacy efforts on behalf of America's counties. This year, the legislative priorities are:

- Protect municipal bonds
- Protect the federal-state-local Partnership for medicaid
- Promote county surface transportation priorities
- Work for a more effective definition of 'Waters of the U.S.'
- Support county authority to collect existing sales tax
- Support policies to promote behavioral health and criminal justice reform
- Support the payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) and secure rural schools (SRS) programs
- Support programs that assist counties to prevent and reduce poverty *~Click here to read more in detail about these topics.*



NACo is a founder and exclusive sponsor of the U.S. Communities™ Government Purchasing Alliance, the leading national government purchasing cooperative that reduces the cost of goods and services by aggregating the purchasing power of public agencies nationwide. U.S. Communities provides participants with access to a broad line of competitively solicited contracts with national suppliers that have committed to providing their lowest overall public agency pricing. *~Click here to learn more.*

NACo Deferred Comp Program

The National Association of Counties (NACo), in partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS), and state associations of counties, provides county employees with a Section 457 Deferred Compensation Program. Since its inception in 1980, NACo's Deferred Compensation Program has grown to become the largest supplemental retirement income program available to county employees. More than 360,000 county employees from more than 3,000 county agencies currently participate in the Program, with accumulated assets of more than \$15 billion. Employee Benefits Include:



- Helps public employees save for their future at no cost to their employer.
- Enables public employees to reduce current taxes.
- Institutes a systematic savings program for public employees.
- Automatic contribution deductions make it easy for employees to save.
- Contributions grow on a tax-deferred basis.
- Employees are 100% vested in their accounts.

Employer Benefits Include:

- Helps employers to recruit and retain high-caliber personnel.
- Usually less expensive to maintain than defined benefit plans.
- Flexibility in program design.
- Can be added to existing offerings.

For a free Nationwide Retirement Solutions presentation in your county please contact your county commissioner's office.



One of the many services Maine counties can provide is access to health discount programs. Even if a resident has insurance, these programs can likely offer a cost savings. Did you know:

- With the Prescription Discount program residents can save an average of 24%
- off the retail price of prescriptions and savings can range from 15% to 75%.
- With the Dental Discount program residents can save 15% to 50% on dental care and 20% on orthodontics.
- With the Health Discount program residents can save 35% on hearing aid prices with complimentary screenings; 40% to 75% off the cost of MRI and CT scans; save 35% off the retail price of frames with purchase of a complete pair of eyeglasses; and save 20% to 70% on a wide variety of physician-approved lab testing services, with confidential results; and much more.

For counties, there are no costs for participating. These programs are provided to counties as a NACo membership benefit! *~Click here for FAQ.*



You are invited to join this free webinar, "Stepping Up: Addressing Housing Needs of People with Mental Illnesses in Jails" on November 9th at 2:00 p.m. to discuss evidence-based strategies. *~Click here to register*

