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CONTINUANCE KEEPS PLAINTIFF IN TREATMENT SUIT OUT OF JAIL

ACLU attorneys on Sept. 19 suggested that an Ipswich man's imminent sentencing was about to test Essex County correction officials, who as a policy do not provide medication-assisted treatment to people with opioid use disorder.

But a continuation of Geoffrey Pesce's case has postponed that day of reckoning.

ACLU officials told the News Service Wednesday that while Pesce expected to be sentenced Sept. 24 in connection with a charge of driving with a suspended license his case in Ipswich District Court was instead continued that day, pushing his sentencing to December or January.

The ACLU says Pesce has been in recovery from opioid addiction for two years thanks to methadone treatments, and the lawsuit claims constitutional and other legal violations in connection with the denial of medication-assisted treatment to house of correction inmates with opioid use disorder.

The plaintiffs in the federal lawsuit against Sheriff Kevin Coppinger and Essex County House of Correction officials in Middleton are claiming violations of the Eighth Amendment that prohibits cruel and unusual punishment as well as a violation of Pesce's rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act. - Chris Triunfo and Michael P. Norton/SHNS

10/3/2018 1:52:19 PM

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