



Sackler Family Seeks Global Opioids Settlement, Says Lawyer

April 25, 2019

April 25, 2019 - PRESSADVANTAGE -

Purdue Pharma, the company that developed and marketed the painkiller OxyContin, is facing more than 2,000 lawsuits from different states, cities, and counties, in relation to the current opioid health crisis. Four members of the Sackler family, which controls the pharmaceutical company, are personally named in these lawsuits for allegedly playing a role in the spread of the epidemic.

The lawsuits blame the family for sparking an unprecedented epidemic of drug abuse. Now the family aims for global opioids settlement, according to their lawyer Mary Jo White of Debevoise & Plimpton.

On behalf of the Sacklers, White said that the family believes the litigation against them and their company is legally dubious, factually misleading, and politically motivated. But rather than facing these cases to the bitter end, the Sacklers want to settle.

“The objective is and remains to try to achieve a global resolution,” said White, a former Manhattan U.S. Attorney, and Securities and Exchange Commission chair. “Purdue and the Sackler family members, given this litigation landscape, would like to resolve with the plaintiffs in a constructive way to get the monies to the

communities that need them, to the people that are addicted?rather than to pay attorneys? fees for years and years and years to come. You?re talking 2,000 cases. How long will they take to go through the court system, is the question.?

Joe Rice of Motley Rice, co-lead counsel in multidistrict litigation consolidating about 1,500 opioid suits in federal court in Cleveland, said that the Sackler family has not previously expressed their desire to settle the litigation globally.

?It appears Ms. White has now made public the willingness to settle,? Rice said in an email to Reuters. ?The issue is who are ?they?, what are they willing to settle, how, when, and for what consideration.?

White did acknowledge that settling more than 2,000 cases will not be easy because there are counties and municipalities involved on top of the state lawsuits. She said that including all of the plaintiffs in a global resolution will be very difficult.

It is also worth noting that White does not represent the entire Sackler family in the opioids litigation. [Click the link to see Madison's top rehab placement programs.](#)

Purdue and the family that owns it have been named individually in more than 200 lawsuits. Earlier this year, a Massachusetts state-court judge unsealed a 277-page complaint by Attorney General Maura Healey. This complaint accused members of the Sackler family of orchestrating a marketing scheme to push sales of OxyContin, supposedly netting them billions of dollars at the expense of patients who became addicted to prescription painkillers or died due to opioid overdose.

The Sacklers regard this claim as particularly misleading, arguing that it flagrantly misrepresented many of the documents cited in the complaint.

White contends that state politicians and plaintiffs? working for contingency fees have contorted the law on fraud, negligence, and public nuisance in order to hang liability on companies that sold government-approved products.

White said that plaintiffs cannot tie the alleged cost of opioid abuse directly to prescription drug defendants. The epidemic is, according to White, not due to misuse of prescription painkillers, but due to a rise in illegal heroin from Mexico and Fentanyl from China.

?Let?s see what the real problem is and what the real solutions are rather than playing a litigation blame game with the fingers pointed in the wrong direction,? White said.

White said that the family wants to reach a global settlement because the Sacklers regards the funding of addiction treatment as "a social responsibility" and not a legal obligation.

"Let's be clear: There is a major public health crisis that we're all dealing with," White said. "But in terms of litigation, what you always want are all of the motivators to be merits-based so that politics are not playing a role, incentives are not playing a role that alters the outcome."

White said: "This is not a crisis of my clients' or Purdue's creation. One of the concerns about all of these litigations and the publicity surrounding them and the misleading allegations... take the public focus off the real problems and how to address them."

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid or alcohol addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

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