

# New York Sues Sackler Family Over Alleged Role in Opioid Epidemic

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New York state has sued the Sackler family over their alleged role in the current opioid epidemic. The billionaire family is behind Purdue Pharma and its prescription painkiller OxyContin. The state general made the announcement following Oklahoma's \$270 million settlement over Purdue's marketing of OxyContin.

New York is the latest to join the growing list of state, county, and city governments alleging the drug manufacturer Purdue and its owners sparked the nation's opioid crisis by putting profits over the safety of their patients.

State attorney General Letitia James said: "This is an extensive lawsuit that leaves no stone unturned."

The suit claims that drug manufacturers collaborated to falsely deny the serious risks of opioid addiction. It also accuses drug distributors of skirting systems meant to limit orders for painkillers. Click the link to see Houston's top rehab placement programs.

Distributors also allegedly helped pharmacies "game" the system to evade the caps, according to the lawsuit. At the heart of the case are Purdue and the members of the Sackler family who owns the company. James called them "the masterminds behind this crisis".

The eight members of the Sackler family named in the suit released their statement through a spokesperson that said the defendants had always acted properly.

"Expanding this baseless lawsuit to include former directors of Purdue Pharma is a misguided attempt to place blame where it does not belong for a complex public health crisis. We strongly deny these allegations, which are inconsistent with the factual record, and will vigorously defend against them," the spokesperson said.

Earlier this week, Purdue and the Sacklers settled a case in Oklahoma before it was due to come to trial in

late May. \$75 million was contributed by the Sacklers as part of the \$270 million settlement even though they were not named personally in the suit there.

This marked the first time that the Sacklers had directly contributed toward addressing the consequences of the opioid epidemic, following months of intensifying criticism and protests against them. Lawsuits have already piled up against the family, each one alleging that they had influenced the opioid crisis.

After negotiating with the Oklahoma attorney general, the Sacklers paid their \$75 million as a "voluntary pledge" to establish an addiction treatment center in Oklahoma. This did not amount to an admission of culpability.

Previously, one of the wealthy Sackler charitable foundations said it was going to suspend its donations to the arts, amid the growing allegations of their involvement in the opioid crisis.

New York state, which currently averages nine opioid-related deaths a day, amended an existing lawsuit against Purdue Pharma to add members of its controlling Sackler family as defendants. The state added five other companies that produce opioid painkillers as well as four distributors as defendants.

The New York lawsuit, which describes the crisis as a "statewide catastrophe," seeks penalties and damages that could add up to tens of millions of dollars, as well as a dedicated fund to curb the opioid epidemic. The companies will also be stripped of their licenses and barred from marketing and distributing painkillers in the state until they abide by strict safeguards.

James mentioned that she was open to settlement talks but hadn't been approached. The lawsuit said that the companies deliberately betrayed their duties under state drug laws "in order to profiteer from the plague they knew would be unleashed". The lawsuit alleges that the eight leading members of the Sackler family and Purdue Pharma were engaged in a strategy of aggressive marketing of OxyContin, while also downplaying the dangers of the pill.

Other defendants in New York's lawsuit are Johnson & Johnson and Janssen Pharmaceuticals; UK-based Mallinckrodt plc, which has an opioid manufacturing plant in Hobart, New York; Dublin-based Endo and Allergan; Israeli pharmaceutical company Teva and the drug distributors McKesson, AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and Rochester Drug Cooperative Inc.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid 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

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