

Five More States File Lawsuits Against Purdue Pharma for Opioid Epidemic

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Five more states recently announced that they are taking legal action against Purdue Pharma and members of the Sackler family for their alleged role in the opioid crisis. Purdue Pharma, owned by the multi-billionaire Sackler family, is the maker of OxyContin, a powerful opioid that is responsible for many overdose-related deaths around the country.

Attorneys general of West Virginia, Kansas, Maryland, Iowa, and Wisconsin took part in the coordinated effort against the manufacturer of the powerful narcotic, accusing them of deceptively pushing powerful painkillers and misrepresenting the drugs? safety as the pills sparked the epidemic. Hundreds of people are dying due to opioid-related overdose in the US every day.

Kansas was the only one that did not target at least one member of the Sackler family or former president Richard Sackler. On the other hand, Maryland named seven family members but not the company in an administrative filing.

West Virginia?s attorney general, Patrick Morrisey, said his state was seeking to hold both the company and

Richard Sackler responsible for deaths and other harms from the worst drug epidemic in US history.

?Even when it became apparent that thousands of people were dying of opioid abuse, Purdue doubled down by continuing its relentless and deceptive campaign to persuade doctors to write prescriptions for OxyContin,? Morrisey said.

Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh said his state?s lawsuit was based on ?two foundational falsehoods? that Purdue promoted widely: That the risk of becoming addicted to OxyContin was very low and that under-treating pain could be harmful to a patient.

Before these five new lawsuits, at least 40 other states have sued companies involved in manufacturing, distributing, or dispensing opioids. About 1,600 cities, counties, Native American tribes, and others have also filed claims that have been consolidated in a massive federal lawsuit in Cleveland.

Recent state lawsuits are increasingly naming members of the Sackler family. This is partly because of evidence that they may have transferred billions of dollars out of the company and into personal accounts over about a decade. Some of the attorneys generals also mentioned that Richard Sackler controlled the company?s strategy to push high doses and increasing amounts of the drug.

The Sackler family is seeking a global settlement in order to deal with all of these lawsuits instead of tackling them endlessly.

In a recent statement, Purdue said that the ?complaints are part of a continuing effort to try these cases in the court of public opinion rather than the justice system. The states cannot link the conduct alleged to the harm described, and so they have invented stunningly overbroad legal theories, which if adopted by courts, will undermine the bedrock legal principle of causation.?

In March, Purdue agreed to a $270 million out-of-court settlement with the state of Oklahoma, where the company faced its first trial on these cases. Members of the Sackler family will pay $75 million of that total from personal funds over five years.

Purdue also won a victory in state court when a North Dakota judge dismissed the state?s lawsuit against the company. Purdue?s president and chief executive, Craig Landau, said in March that declaring bankruptcy is an option the company might have to explore if jury verdicts or settlements become too costly. Click the link to see Ann Arbor's top rehab placement programs.

Morrisey noted that West Virginia had previously sued Purdue in 2001, recouping $10 million in a settlement with the company. But he said the state was legally entitled to pursue Purdue again because it had not

changed its practices.

The attorney general promised to ?get as much as we possibly can for the state of West Virginia,? which, he said, had suffered ?far too much senseless death? and ?many ruined lives.?

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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