Sackler Family Sued by New Jersey for Alleged Role in Opioid Epidemic

June 06, 2019

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The New Jersey attorney general?s office filed a lawsuit against members of the Sackler family, owners of the pharmaceutical giant Purdue Pharma, for their alleged role in spreading the opioid epidemic. The company allegedly used marketing strategies that overstated the benefits of their opioid drugs while also downplaying the health risks of their products.

Purdue Pharma is the company behind OxyContin, an opioid that plays a key role in the current epidemic. While opioids do work well against chronic and severe pain, their high potential for overdose and addiction cannot be ignored. In fact, around 130 Americans die from opioid-related overdose every day.

The suit, filed in Essex County Superior Court, names eight members of the billionaire Sackler family. This includes former Purdue Pharma chairman and president Richard Sackler. Also named in the new lawsuit are Jonathan D. Sackler; Dr. Kathe Sackler; Ilene Sackler Lefcourt; Mortimer D.A. Sackler; Beverly Sackler; Theresa Sackler; and David A. Sackler.

The suit includes three counts of violating the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act and one count of violating the

state?s False Claims Act.

This is not the first lawsuit filed against the Sackler family and Purdue Pharma following the breakout of the opioid epidemic. The lawsuits from all the states combined will now reach the thousands. The family is now hoping to reach a global settlement, knowing that it would take years to settle all of these lawsuits.

The Sacklers insist that there was no wrongdoing on the part of Purdue; that their company used responsible marketing techniques; and that the lawsuits are being piled on top of each other in an attempt to take the issue to the court of public opinion.

The New Jersey lawsuit, however, accuses the Sacklers of marketing their opioids as rarely addictive, encouraging doctors to prescribe the drugs without the proper testing and targeting groups like the elderly.

?They've made millions off the backs of patients that became addicted,? said New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal in a conference call with reporters.

Grewal added that the company fueled the opioid epidemic with the pills in the 1990s and drove addicted individuals to reach for cheaper alternatives such as Fentanyl and heroin. He also highlights the rise in overdose fatalities involving opioids. Click the link to see Cleveland's top rehab placement programs.

In 2017, there were 2,700 heroin-related fatal overdoses in New Jersey. This only rose further to 3,100 in 2018, according to Grewal.

?We have an obligation to stand up for the residents in our state that have been hit hard by the misconduct,? said the attorney general.

Representatives of the Sackler family placed the blame on heroin and Fentanyl trafficked in from China and Mexico, instead of their products.

?This baseless lawsuit is yet another 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,? according to the statement. ?We have always acted properly and are committed to supporting solutions that save lives by preventing addiction and abuse of prescription medicines and treating those who are suffering from addiction.?

Purdue Pharma is not the only pharmaceutical company facing charges. Johnson & Johnson is facing charges in Oklahoma, similar to Teva Pharmaceutical.

As of now, there are about 1,700 cases against Purdue Pharma as part of a massive multi-district litigation that's spread of over several states and municipalities.

In March, Purdue Pharma agreed to pay $270 million to settle a lawsuit brought by the Oklahoma attorney general. Purdue Pharma settled but admitted no fault as part of the agreement, court records show.

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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