Pennsylvania Sues Purdue Pharma for Being the ?Jet Fuel? of US Opioid Crisis

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Pennsylvania sued OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma for allegedly serving as ?jet fuel? for America?s current opioid crisis. The epidemic, which is killing hundreds of Americans every day, is now one of the biggest public health crises in US history.

The lawsuit, filed by Pennsylvania attorney general Josh Shapiro, accuses Purdue Pharma of deceptive marketing and criminal negligence in pushing doctors to prescribe the opioid. The Sackler-owned drug company is the Connecticut-based maker of OxyContin. Shapiro himself described the drug as ?jet fuel? for the opioid epidemic, and his lawsuit seeks to hold the company accountable.

?We?ve lost lives, we?ve lost money and we?ve squandered the opportunity,? Shapiro said in a press conference. ?While Purdue and its executives were profiting and lining their own pockets, they were leaving a path of loss, heartache, and bills for someone else in Pennsylvania to pay.? Purdue has made more than $35 billion in revenue since OxyContin was released in 1996.

This is not the first lawsuit aimed at Purdue Pharma and certain members of the Sackler family. It follows a

wave of legal action against the pharmaceutical giant, owned by a multi-billionaire family who now seeks a global settlement. The family understands that with the thousands of lawsuits filed against them, it may be impossible to deal with all of them.

In fact, more than three dozen states have sued Purdue for underplaying the risks of addiction. A consolidation of 1,500-plus lawsuits filed by US cities and counties is currently playing out in a federal courthouse in Cleveland.

Pennsylvania?s lawsuit is the first to allege in detail that Purdue was responsible for a prolific and calculated scheme of pushing drugs on prescribers. The lawsuit describes it as a ?marketing blitzkrieg? that targets doctors.

According to the complaint, Pennsylvania received half a million sales visits by Purdue Pharma reps since 2007?the highest of any state except for California. Pennsylvania is now among the hardest-hit states in the opioid crisis.

The complaint details a multi-pronged promotion strategy from Purdue that allegedly involves unrelenting sales calls, as well as branded and unbranded promotion. It also says that Purdue Pharma paid select ?key opinion leaders? to make seemingly unbiased endorsements of Purdue products. One of the main targets of the alleged promotion strategy was targeting vulnerable patient groups such as the elderly and veterans.

The Pennsylvania lawsuit also alleges that Purdue knew of OxyContin?s high addiction risk but continued to misrepresent these dangers. Shapiro singled out Purdue?s propagation of the term ?pseudoaddiction? that the company invented to encourage more opioid prescriptions despite the evidence of real addiction. ?The conduct is absolutely outrageous and unlawful,? said Shapiro.

Purdue responded in a statement that it ?vigorously denies the allegations filed today in Pennsylvania?. The company called the allegations ?misleading attacks? that are ?part of a continuing effort to try these cases in the court of public opinion rather than the justice system.? Click the link to see Binghamton's top rehab placement programs.

Purdue added: ?such allegations demand clear evidence linking the conduct alleged to the harm described, but we believe the state fails to show such causation and offers little evidence to support its sweeping legal claims.?

Shapiro declined to outline plans regarding whether or not he would add the Sacklers in name to the suit. But he said: ?We are not done here. This lawsuit is just the first step.?

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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