

AG Kaul: Files lawsuit to hold Purdue Pharma accountable for role in opioid crisis

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After years of inaction by previous administration, Kaul and Evers take decisive steps

MADISON – Today, Attorney General Josh Kaul and Governor Tony Evers announced their decision to file lawsuits against Purdue Pharma L.P., Purdue Pharma Inc., and Richard Sackler for their role in misleading the public about their products. Purdue Pharma is the producer of the highly addictive painkiller, OxyContin. The lawsuits aim to hold Purdue Inc. accountable for these actions which have damaged communities across Wisconsin. Assembly Democratic Leader Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) applauded the Attorney General for filing these lawsuits:

“The opioid epidemic has taken a massive toll on Wisconsin’s families and communities. As elected officials, we should be doing everything possible to confront this public health emergency,” Rep. Hintz stated. **“Attorney General Kaul’s actions today show that he will not back down in the face of corporate criminals. For far too long, Purdue Pharma Inc. and former Chairman, Richard Sackler, have pushed highly addictive narcotics on Americans in every corner of our country. This lawsuit makes crystal clear that Purdue misled the public and medical professionals by overstating the benefits of OxyContin and downplaying the dangers posed by this drug.”**

According to data from the Department of Health Services (DHS), in 2017 alone,

916 people in Wisconsin died from opioid overdoses, more than the number killed in car crashes. The opioid epidemic has skyrocketed since Purdue first introduced OxyContin in 1996. The volume of prescription opioids per capita in Wisconsin rose 425 percent between 1999 and 2015.

“People are dying because of the deceptive practices that Purdue utilizes. This lawsuit sends a signal that these actions will not be tolerated in the state of Wisconsin. This is what leadership looks like. Attorney General Kaul understands the human cost of the opioid epidemic in communities across our state. We must work together to fight back against this crisis, and hold accountable those who allowed it to happen.”

The previous Attorney General, Brad Schimel, refused to join the multi-state lawsuit against Purdue Pharma Inc.