

Joint Committee on Finance: Co-chairs statement on approval of historic opioid settlements

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Madison.... The Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC), State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and State Representative Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam) issued the following statement after the committee unanimously approved Wisconsin's allocation of funds from two opioid settlements, which are part of nationwide litigation totaling a historic \$26 billion:

“The JFC continues to fulfill our statutory duty and approve settlements in a timely manner. This historic agreement will provide substantial assistance to communities across Wisconsin to help fight the opioid epidemic, which has continued to ravage our state and nation.

The settlement we approved today will ensure that as much funding as possible goes toward opioid abuse prevention and recovery—a critically needed support after overdose deaths increased more than 25% and hit a record high last year.”

The State of Wisconsin and 87 local governments within the state have been parties to nationwide litigation against three major pharmaceutical distributors—Cardinal Health, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen—and opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson for actions that contributed to the opioid epidemic.

The JFC met this afternoon to approve terms of these settlements pertaining to funds being allocated to Wisconsin state and local governments, which is anticipated to total \$420.2 million over 18 years.

2021 Wisconsin Act 57, enacted in June, requires that 70% of the settlement funds

go to the 87 local units of governments that are parties in the opiate litigation and 30% of the settlement proceeds will go to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS). Settlement funds going to local governments and to DHS must be used to fight the opioid epidemic.