



Contra Costa County

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Media Release

For Release: May 9, 2018

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Contra Costa Sues Opioid Manufacturers and Distributors for Creating an Opioid Epidemic

Contra Costa County is one of 30 California counties that have filed litigation against opioid manufacturers and distributors for creating an opioid epidemic in this state. These 30 counties represent approximately 10.5 million residents. All 30 counties are filing suit in federal court and expect their cases to be transferred to the Multi-District Litigation in Ohio, where more than 500 public entities have filed similar suits.

The lawsuit seeks reimbursement of taxpayer funds that already have been spent responding to the opioid epidemic in Contra Costa County; for ongoing costs of continuing the fight, including emergency response, prevention, monitoring and treatment; and for prospective relief to help the County undo some of the widespread damage that these drug manufacturers and distributors have caused.

Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Karen Mitchoff, noted: "This litigation is an important tool to help us recover the taxpayer funds currently being used and desperately needed to intervene and try to counteract the opioid epidemic."

According to the County's complaint on file with the U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, Case No. 3:18-cv-02705, many of the nation's largest drug manufacturers misinformed doctors about the addictiveness and efficacy of opioids. The manufacturer defendants include Purdue Pharma; Teva Ltd.; Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (a wholly-owned subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson); Endo Health Solutions, Inc.; Allergan PLC; and Mallinckrodt. Drugs manufactured by these companies include, but are not limited to: OxyContin, Actiq, Fentora, Duragesic, Nucynta, Nucynta ER, Opana/Opana ER, Percodan, Percocet, Zydone, Kadian and Norco. In addition to the wrongdoing by drug manufacturers, the lawsuit asserts that the nation's largest drug distributors – including Cardinal Health, AmerisourceBergen, and McKesson Corp. – failed to monitor, identify and report "suspicious" opioid shipments to pharmacies, in violation of the federal Controlled Substances Act.

The County Counsel's Office and following six law firms comprise the County's legal team: Baron & Budd; Levin, Papantonio, Thomas, Mitchell, Rafferty & Proctor; Powell & Majestro; Greene, Ketchum, Farrell, Bailey & Tweel; Hill, Peterson, Carper, Bee & Deitzler; and McHugh Fuller Law Group. These firms currently represent over 300 cities and counties throughout the United States.



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