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California's lawsuit against Purdue Pharma is one of many following a big settlement

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The new complaint, filed Monday in Los Angeles County Superior Court, came as Hawaii, Maine and Washington, D.C, also sued Purdue Pharma and founding family member Richard Sackler. It's separate from a five-year-old state action in Orange County Superior Court against Purdue and other opioids manufacturers that was recently scheduled for trial in April 2020.

Becerra didn't address the other case when he announced the lawsuit Monday, but it's a similar to a false advertising, public nuisance and unfair competition complaint against Purdue and other manufacturers that seeks civil remedies and a statewide injunction and was filed in 2014. *People v. Purdue Pharma et al.*, 14-00725287 (Orange Super. Ct., filed May 21, 2014).

The new case includes public nuisance and unfair competition claims, as well as a claim of untrue or misleading representations. It seeks similar remedies, including an injunction, but cites more data about the effects of opioids as well as Purdue's tactics and profits.

The defendants are limited to Purdue Pharma, its subsidiaries and Sackler, but Becerra said Monday more defendants could be added. *People v. Purdue Pharma, L.P. et al.*, 19STCV19045 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed June 3, 2019).

"We will go wherever the evidence takes us, and we will pursue whoever we think we can charge and file against," Becerra said at a Sacramento news conference. "We're going to hold people accountable, and we're not going to stop."

Sackler, the former Purdue president and board chairman, has recently emerged as a litigation target along with other members of the Sackler family, which amassed a billion-dollar fortune through its ownership of Purdue.

The New Jersey attorney general's office last week sued eight family members, and the family in March contributed to Purdue's \$270 million settlement with the state of Oklahoma, though it was not a defendant.

Oklahoma's case is ongoing in a bench trial before Cleveland County Judge Thad Balkman in Norman, with Johnson & Johnson and subsidiaries the remaining the defendants after Teva Pharmaceuticals Ltd. settled last week for \$85 million.

Meanwhile, federal multi-district litigation in the Northern District of Ohio is scheduled for trial in October, with settlement discussions scheduled this month and in July.

Purdue's settlement in March was followed by a flood of new lawsuits, including state-led actions that aren't subject to the multi-district litigation. A lawsuit on behalf of the city of Prescott, Arizona, was filed before the settlement by Jeffrey H. Reeves, a partner at Theodora Oringher PC in Costa Mesa.

Reeves said more lawsuits are in the works: Theodora Oringher represents other cities and counties in Arizona, as well as in Colorado, Maryland, Kansas and Missouri. Reeves said Monday he expects the cases will stay out of Ohio multi-district litigation because the claims are state-specific.

He's targeting manufacturers, including Purdue Pharma, Endo Health Solutions and Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc., and the Sackler family, distributors such as McKesson Corp. and local doctors who prescribe opioid-based medication.

Reeves said the new cases from the state attorney generals are interesting but not surprising, given the settlement in Oklahoma.

"These states have obviously seen that the Oklahoma state AG's case is meritorious and has resulted in a recovery for that state, so these other AGs have seen fit to follow suit. That makes sense, and I expect more AGs will follow suit," Reeves said in an email.

"But these state AG cases will have little to no impact on the thousands of cases pending around the country that have been filed by counties and cities," he added. "Those municipalities have also been harmed, and will have large abatement costs, and are entitled to seek and recover their own redress in court."

The 2014 lawsuit in Orange County Superior Court is a collective action on behalf of the state of California, filed by Orange and Santa Clara counties. Los Angeles County and the city of Oakland joined last June.

Attorneys involved in that case could not be reached for comment on Monday, but a judge is to consider consolidating it with nine lawsuits recently filed on behalf of other California cities and counties, including Alameda and Kern counties and the cities of El Monte, Fullerton, Irvine, San Clemente, Westminster, Santa Ana and Costa Mesa.

Robins Kaplan LLP represents them, and the firm is trying to stay the cases and coordinate them with the state action in Orange County.

A trial scheduled for this month was vacated earlier this year, but Orange County Superior Court Judge [Peter J. Wilson](#) recently rescheduled it for April.

It's unclear if the new lawsuit will affect that date, but the Ohio multi-district litigation already has been affecting discovery fights in Orange County. Pending motions before Wilson include a motion to compel deposition from Janssen officials.

Company officials have said they won't make themselves available "because they already produced testimony" in the federal lawsuit, according to a plaintiffs' motion to compel filed May 30.

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