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## Manufacturers and Distributors Responsible for the Opioid Epidemic Sued

On average 130 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose.

From 1999 to 2017, nearly 500,000 people have died from a drug overdose involving opioids (source: CDC).

76 billion opioid pills were distributed across the country between the years 2006 and 2012. That's enough to supply every person in the United States with 36 pills each year (source: CDC).

## Who We Represent and Why

Local governments across the U.S. are in critical need of funds to abate the disastrous effects of the opioid epidemic. The cost to governmental agencies nationwide is estimated to be around **\$75 billion per year**. These critical billions are needed to, among other things:

- Fund public healthcare expenses
- Fund treatment facilities
- Fund education programs about opioid addiction
- Fund law enforcement training and increased payroll
- Fund criminal justice and court expenses
- Fund incarceration expenses

**Theodora Oringher** represents governments impacted by the opioid epidemic. We represent several dozen governmental agencies located in Arizona, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, and Missouri. The targets of this opioid litigation are distributors and manufacturers of opioids.

Damages sought include:

- Building and maintaining treatment facilities
- Reimbursing Medicaid and other governmental healthcare expenses, including payment for unnecessarily prescribed opioids and the antidote to treat overdoses
- Reimbursing governments for the expense of hiring and training additional law enforcement and medical personnel
- Reimbursing governments for costs of prosecutions and incarceration.

## Opioid Distributors & Manufacturers Are Being Held Accountable or Taking Responsibility

In August of 2019, an Oklahoma judge ruled that **Johnson & Johnson** must pay the State of

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Oklahoma **\$572 million**.

**"Based upon my finding that the Defendants' false, misleading, and dangerous marketing campaigns have caused exponentially increasing rates of addiction, overdose deaths, and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome, I conclude these are unlawful acts . . ."**

-Honorable Thad Balkman, District Judge

In 2017, **McKesson Corporation**, one of the nation's largest distributors of pharmaceuticals, paid a **\$150 million** civil penalty to the federal government for failure to report inexplicably large, frequent, and otherwise suspicious orders of opioids oxycodone and hydrocodone.

As far back as 2007, **Purdue Pharma**, arguably the pioneer of the opioid epidemic and maker of OxyContin pleaded guilty and agreed to pay the federal government **\$600 million** for aggressively misbranding OxyContin as posing a low threat of abuse and addiction.

Indeed, **Purdue Pharma** agreed to pay Oklahoma **\$270 million** to avoid the same fate as **Johnson & Johnson**. And fellow opioid manufacturer, **Teva Pharmaceutical** settled with Oklahoma for **\$85 million**.

Likewise, in Ohio, manufacturers **Endo International** and **Allergan PLC** agreed to pay two Ohio counties over **\$15 million**.

## Opioid Epidemic: The Human Toll

People of all ages, races, ethnicities, education levels and socioeconomic statuses have been ravaged by the opioid epidemic. White, working-class people living in rural areas make up one of the largest subset of deaths, but overdoses and deaths are found among minorities, men, women, elderly and teens, in small towns and large metropolitan areas, and among the unemployed and astronomically successful, such as professional sports and entertainment stars.

The opioid epidemic has caused astronomical illness and death, as well as abusive of substitutes for prescription opioids that have become just as deadly, if not more, than their predecessors.

Prescription Opioids:

2,000,000 Americans are currently addicted to opioids.

More than 90,000,000 Americans have used a prescription opioid painkiller in the past year.

The most commonly used prescription opioids are: hydrocodone (such as Vicodin, Lorcet & Lortab), Oxycodone (such as OxyContin, Percodan & Roxicet), methadone, fentanyl, and morphine. (source: National Institute on Drug Abuse).

Prescription opioids have proven addictive and deadly. But they have also led to the abuse of

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illegal substitutes such as heroin and illicitly manufactured fentanyl.

## Prescription Opioid Substitutes:

Illicitly manufactured fentanyl is 50-100 times more powerful than morphine, and 30 to 50 times more potent than heroin.

One fentanyl analog, Carfentanil, is 5,000 times stronger than heroin. An amount as small as a few drops of sand can be fatal.

The drug is so powerful that even when numerous doses of the antidote naloxone (Narcan) are timely administered, the victim would be lucky to survive.

Our local governments deserve help remedying the destruction caused by opioid manufactures and distributors. **Theodora Oringher** stands on the front lines to ensure those government voices are heard in the justice system. And the opioid manufacturers and distributors will pay the price for justice.

## Attorneys

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## Related News

TO Joins Briefing Urging Opioid MDL Judge to Reject “One-Size-Fits-All” Approach to Common Benefit Fees; Judge Agrees

The Current Climate in Opioid Litigation

Ohio settlement could pave way for Arizona entities in opioid litigation

Our View: Carroll County right to want ‘our own case, our own judge, our own trial,’ in opioids suit

Carroll County refiles suit against opioid manufacturers, hoping to keep case in state court

City to consider hiring attorneys to sue over opioid crisis

Pinal County suing opioid makers, distributors

Proposed Purdue Pharma Bankruptcy Settlement Creates Uncertainty in Md.

Carroll County drops opioid lawsuit but plans to refile — with aim to keep it out of federal court

Jeff Reeves Quoted in Statement on Verdict in Oklahoma Opioid Lawsuit

Federal judge decides Prescott's lawsuit against opioid companies will be heard in Arizona

Millions of Pills Flooded Towns, Arizona Republic

Commissioners inch toward filing lawsuit vs. opioid kingpins, [www.richmond-news.com](http://www.richmond-news.com)

Apache County Files Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturers, Apache County, County Attorney's Office

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

Prescott Sues Opioid Companies; Case Will Not Join Class Action Suit, [Knau.org](http://Knau.org)

Prescott Sues Manufacturers, Distributors Over Opioid Crisis, [KTAR.com](http://KTAR.com)

## Opioid Litigation



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City of Prescott Files Suit Against Opioid Manufacturers & Distributors, [Prescottenews.com](http://Prescottenews.com)  
Prescott Sues Pharmaceutical Companies for Damages Created by Opioid Crisis, [dcourier.com](http://dcourier.com)  
Prescott City Council Hires Law Firms for Possible Opioid Suit, [Knau.org](http://Knau.org)  
Prescott Council to Vote on Potential Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturers, [PrescottNews.com](http://PrescottNews.com)