



News Release

Office of the Attorney General

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2018

#18-10

CONTACT: Leigh Ann Jones

(615) 741-5860

leighannapple.jones@ag.tn.gov

Tennessee Attorney General Sues Purdue Pharma *Investigations of Other Opioid Manufacturers and Distributors Continue*

Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III, along with a bipartisan group of Attorneys General, sued Purdue Pharma today for its unlawful marketing and promotion of OxyContin and other drugs and its role in causing and prolonging the opioid epidemic in Tennessee.

The State's lawsuit, filed in Knox County Circuit Court, alleges Purdue violated the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act, violated its 2007 settlement with the State, and created a statewide public nuisance by interfering with the health of Tennesseans and the commercial marketplace.

Attorney General Slatery said, "Our Office has conducted an extensive investigation into Purdue's highly aggressive marketing practices and other unlawful conduct. We believe Purdue's conduct has been unconscionable, and we intend to hold the company accountable. Three Tennesseans are dying each day from opioid-related overdoses, and we are committed to the hard work that needs to be done to address this tragedy."

The allegations in the State's approximately 270-page complaint demonstrate how Purdue helped to cause one of the most devastating public health crises in Tennessee's history. The lawsuit lays out, in stark detail, how Purdue violated the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act by making numerous unlawful marketing claims about its narcotics, including misleading claims about the safety of the drugs and their benefits to consumers. Public reports previously disclosed that OxyContin prescriptions were for such large quantities that they were unlikely to be consumed by a single person, there were hours-long wait times at doctor offices, and there were drug deals outside doctor offices. The complaint shows that Purdue knew patients were dying from overdoses and that its drugs were being illegally sold to non-patients. Yet, Purdue promoted OxyContin and other narcotics to some of its top prescribers in Tennessee despite these many red flags and targeted our most vulnerable citizens.

The Attorney General requested that the complaint be filed under a temporary seal because Purdue previously claimed that information produced to the State during its investigation is confidential. The order signed by the judge would allow the seal to expire in 10 days unless Purdue takes action to extend it. The Attorney General believes the complaint should be made available to the public and efforts to keep it under seal will only dilute Purdue's accountability for its conduct.



Tennessee leads a multistate group of Attorneys General who are investigating certain manufacturers and distributors and, while not a party, voluntarily engaging in settlement discussions in connection with the federal opioid multidistrict litigation pending in Cleveland, Ohio. The Attorney General's Office continues to work toward a global resolution that will provide comprehensive injunctive relief as well as statewide remediation to assist with prevention, treatment, and education in every community—particularly those hardest hit by this opioid epidemic. “We remain hopeful about reaching an early resolution, but, as evidenced by today's action against Purdue, we will not hesitate to file suit if it is in the State's best interest,” added Attorney General Slatery.

Purdue Pharma is headquartered in Stamford, CT. For more information, see <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/foi/purdue/purdue-motion-5-15-2018.pdf>