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NEO communities could be getting thousands of lawsuit dollars for drug treatment and prevention programs

Opioid negotiation includes hundreds of Ohio cities

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By [Shannon Houser](#) | November 21, 2019 at 2:31 PM EST - Updated November 21 at 6:54 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio (WOIO) - Northeast Ohio communities could be getting thousands of dollars for drug treatment and prevention programs. as part of a class action lawsuit against pharmacies and drug makers blamed for the opioid crisis.

In 2017 Ohio was ranked second in the nation for overdose deaths involving opioids. More than 4,000 people died that year from overdoses

It's why hundreds of Ohio cities and counties are now part of lawsuits against the largest drug manufactures and pharmacies.

Last month, Cuyahoga and Summit counties settled on a \$260 million deal in federal court against major drug makers.

Pharmacy chains will likely face an October 2020 trial for their alleged role in the opioid crisis.

"I suspect you're going to see a lot happening in 2020 in terms of global settlements," said Hunter Shkolnik, leading litigator of the Ohio MDL trial team.

They're bringing forward a class action negotiation that involves hundreds of Northeast Ohio cities and counties.

"This preserves Cuyahoga and Summit Counties settlements with certain defendants, but allows them to participate as to any other defendant that engages in settlement negotiations going forward," Shkolnik said.

Cities and counties involved in this federal suit could get thousands of dollars from drug makers who are accused of misleading the public about how addictive opiates are, all in an effort to increase sales.

"This is not money that is going into a general fund to fix roads. This is money that together is going to be used to treat the problem," explained Shkolnik.

According to national statistics, one baby with opioid withdrawal syndrome is born every 15 minutes.

Some of the cash would also go toward treatment for addicted pregnant women and their newborn babies.

"The people of Cleveland are going to be receiving this benefit as we speak," Shkolnik said.

For more information on the class action negotiation, [click here](#).

You can also find a breakdown of how much your city might receive based on a hypothetical negotiation amount.

Friday, Nov. 22 is the last date where cities can opt-out of the lawsuit.

19 News reached out to a handful of local cities and those who responded said they planned to participate in the lawsuit.

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