

# Knox County joins suit against opioid manufacturers

---

cm centralmaine.com/2019/02/12/knox-county-joins-suit-against-opioid-manufacturers/

By STEPHEN BETTS The Courier-Gazette

February 12, 2019

ROCKLAND — Knox County has joined a lawsuit alleging that opioid manufacturers helped create the drug epidemic by pushing doctors to prescribe their painkillers to increase profits even though patients were becoming addicted.

County commissioners voted 3-0 Tuesday to hire Napoli Shkolnik PLLC and Trafton, Matzen, Belleau & Frenette LLP. Commissioners met Tuesday afternoon with attorney Adam Lee of the Auburn law firm.

Knox has become the 12th county in Maine to join the lawsuits against 28 manufacturers of opioids. There are also several municipalities, mainly large cities such as Portland, that have filed lawsuits.

There is no cost to the county. The law firm will be paid 25 percent of any money recouped from the lawsuits.

Counties and municipalities across the country have argued that the manufacturers knowingly made and distributed quantities of prescription opioids far beyond amounts that were medically necessary, leading to an epidemic of addiction and death that has placed a huge financial strain on local governments around the country.

Lee said Knox County would provide the law firm information on the number of crimes and arrests tied to drug addiction. He said the amount of time that the staff would need to put together that information would not be onerous.

Knox County Administrator Andy Hart said he has talked to other counties and some say it took a lot of staff time to gather information for lawyers, but other counties said the information gathering was a "piece of cake."

Rockland considered joining the lawsuits last March.

There are 1,500 entities filing lawsuits against the manufacturers. The lawsuits are being filed in state courts, but then moved to federal court. Lee said the federal court has yet to rule whether that is the proper venue. If not, the cases will return to state court.

There is no timetable and the case could take years, Lee said.

[< Previous](#)

[Storm expected to bring at least 6 inches of snow to Portland, 8-12 in other areas](#)

[Next >](#)

[Skowhegan selectmen vote to wait to fill vacancy on board after death of selectwoman](#)