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TOP STORY

## Saratoga County hires lawyers for possible opioid lawsuit

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Saratoga County has become the first local county to get in on the litigation against the makers of prescription opioid painkillers that have been blamed for fueling the heroin addiction crisis.

The county Board of Supervisors has voted to retain New York City law firm Napoli Shkolnik PLLC to pursue a lawsuit against the pharmaceutical companies that made drugs such as OxyContin and hydrocodone.

Lawsuits have been filed by municipalities around the country against pharmaceutical companies for alleged fraudulent marketing schemes for opioid painkillers that resulted in thousands of addicts who turned to heroin when the painkiller pills become less effective for them over time. The litigation seeks recovery of some of the costs to deal with the addiction epidemic.

“Like most areas of the state, opioid abuse has become an epidemic in Saratoga County,” Ed Kinowski, Stillwater town supervisor and chairman of the Board of Supervisors, said in a county-issued news release. “The ease of access, and over-prescription of these dangerous drugs has led to the death of too many of our friends and neighbors. The misrepresentation of the nature of these drugs has led to an alarming rise in addiction and overdoses.”

The Board of Supervisors said it is looking to to recover some of the financial costs associated with training programs, purchases of equipment, and the development of increases public services to help aide residents fighting their addictions.

There will be no costs to taxpayers for the litigation, and the law firm will only be compensated from a portion of any settlement that may be reached.

Supervisors in Warren and Washington counties have received pitches from law firms to get involved in the litigation as well, but have not yet signed on with a law firm.

Warren County supervisors met with Albany lawyer Donald Boyajian last month, who was representing a national firm, and were awaiting a potential meeting with another lawyer who represented a different firm.

It appeared there was significant interest among Warren County board members for getting involved in the litigation.

Washington County Attorney Roger Wickes said some county leaders listened to the proposal made to Saratoga County, and the county board's Finance Committee would likely review the issue next month.

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### Don Lehman

Don Lehman covers crime and Warren County government for The Post-Star. His work can be found on Twitter @PS\_CrimeCourts and on [poststar.com/app/blogs](http://poststar.com/app/blogs).

