



Ogdensburg joins lawsuit against manufacturers of opioids

By Fernando Narro (Reporter, Producer) | March 28, 2019



Photo: U.S. Air Force/Tech. Sgt. Mark R. W. Ordres-Woempner

Several counties and cities in New York are accusing pharmaceutical companies of using false advertising and deceptive marketing practices to minimize the risk of addiction to opioids.

The City of Ogdensburg became the latest to join a statewide lawsuit against pharmaceutical

companies and distributors of these drugs.

This comes as just a day after one of those manufacturers, Purdue Pharma, agreed to a [\\$270 million-dollar settlement](#) with the state of Oklahoma to fund addiction research and treatment.

Councilman Dan Skamperle says he hopes the lawsuit brings an end to these corporate practices. “For these companies to work to create this drug epidemic is simply terrible and this is what needs to end,” Skamperle said.

He says that the same companies he believes created the epidemic also profited from it by selling Narcan to local governments. Narcan is a life-saving drug that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose.

“Using doctors and patients’ pain to create an addiction problem, and now its affecting the communities that the taxpayers have to pay for, and then all of the sudden the drug companies themselves say, ‘well, we have an antidote’ and they turn around and sell it once again to government and cities and people like that,” Skamperle said. “I mean, this is quite the scam, I believe were my words the other night. And it is a scam.”

City Manager Sarah Purdy says there is [no cost](#) for Ogdensburg to join the litigation. The New York City law firm Napoli Shkolnik, PLLC is representing the local governments involved in the suit in exchange of a 25 percent cut of any potential settlement.

The first state trial is scheduled for March of 2020.

Meanwhile, New York Attorney General Letitia James has announced she'll hold a press conference later this morning in New York City to address the opioid crisis.

In a statement, her staff said there will be an "important announcement."

We'll have an update tomorrow morning during *Morning Edition and The Eight O'clock Hour*.

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