



Town of Amherst to file lawsuit against opioid pharmaceutical companies

By Rachele Mongiovi, News 4 Reporter Published: March 5, 2018, 11:09 pm

AMHERST, N.Y. (WIVB) — The Town of Amherst is suing drug companies as part of the fight against the overdose epidemic.

Town leaders claim the drug makers have misled their customers.

“We’re not gonna let you get away with murder. We’re gonna make you responsible, we’re gonna make you pay up the social costs that you’re causing and help us solve this problem,” said Stanley Sliwa, Town of Amherst Supervisor.

“In law enforcement’s history overdoses were certainly serious events, but now each and every one is being treated like a homicide. Upwards of over a dozen or more deaths and we’re seeing 30 or more applications of Narcan just from police officers and probably 70 some odd calls a year or 80 calls at the very least,” said Chief John Askey, Amherst Police Department.

Town officials say emergency services are being stretched thin and overdoses are straining resources for the police department, fire department and first responders.

“It’s a lot of work and effort that a municipality has to put into providing very critical life saving measures, very critical criminal measures, everything that kind of comes along with the epidemic,” said Amherst Town Supervisor Brian Kulpa.

Monday the town board hired a New York City law firm, Napoli Shkolnik, PLLC, in a lawsuit against opioid pharmaceutical companies. The town is

suing manufactures, distributors and key marketing leaders who mislead the public into believing opioids cannot and do not lead to addiction.

The more than 250 page lawsuit accuses companies of false advertising, fraud and public nuisance.

“I think it’s helpful, I think anytime people can be held accountable for their actions, it’s helpful. My officers see the families first hand that see a loved one passed away at home and it’s just devastating,” said Askey.

The lawsuit is expected to be filed this week in the Erie County Clerk’s Office.

The law firm the town hired will not cost the town anything, the firm will only be paid if the suit is successful.

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