

# PBC to select legal team for possible lawsuit in opioid fight

- [Wayne Washington](#) | Palm Beach Post Staff Writer | March 6, 2018

Three teams of law firms have emerged as the finalists to represent Palm Beach County [if the county files suit](#) against drug makers or sellers as part of its fight against the [opioid epidemic](#).

Commissioners are expected to choose one of those teams when they meet on March 13.

The firms have all agreed to work on a contingency basis, meaning they would keep a portion of whatever money they help the county win in a court battle. No taxpayer money would be used.

No final decision has been made to file suit, but commissioners have expressed support for a suit aimed at recovering some of the money the county has spent responding to the crisis.

County Mayor Melissa McKinlay, whose former aide lost a daughter in the opioid epidemic, asked County Attorney Denise Nieman to get proposals from firms that would serve as outside counsel if the county filed suit. Nieman has said her office does not have the specific expertise or resources necessary to do battle with deep-pocketed and politically well-connected drug manufacturers or distributors.

More than a dozen firms [initially expressed interest](#) in representing the county if it decided to file suit.

Ultimately, the county's request for proposals generated nine formal responses, and from those a three-person selection committee picked three teams of finalists:

- Motley Rice LLC of South Carolina, Gelber Schachter & Greenberg, P.A. of Miami and Colson Hicks Eidson of Coral Gables.

- The Ferraro Law Firm, P.A. of Miami, Napoli Shkolnik, PLLC of New York and Stull, Stull & Brody, also of New York.

- Lief, Cabraser, Heimann & Bernstein LLP of California, Robbins, Geller, Rudman & Dowd LLP of California, Weiss, Handler & Cornwell, P.A. of Boca Raton and The Ryles Firm, LLC of West Palm Beach.

[Delray Beach](#) has hired Robbins Geller Rudman & Dowd, a national firm with an office in Boca Raton, to represent it in a lawsuit against at least eight pharmaceutical makers and distributors, including Purdue Pharma and McKesson Corp.

A report from Nieman's office found that governments across the country have begun to file suit against drug manufacturers and distributors, blamed by some for not doing enough to limit the availability of their potent products.

More than 300 government entities across the country have filed suit, including Osceola County, Alachua County, Jacksonville and Delray Beach.

The Palm Beach Post has reported extensively on the opioid epidemic, which has devastated families and strained government budgets.

McKinlay has pushed for state and national efforts to combat the epidemic.

Gov. Rick Scott has declared the opioid crisis to be a public health epidemic and has sought additional state resources to combat it.

McKinlay is in Washington, D.C., this week providing fellow National Association of County members with an update on what Florida has done to address the opioid crisis.

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