

US states sue OxyContin maker over opioid crisis

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Six US states sued OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma on Tuesday for alleged deceptive trade practices related to its marketing of the opioid painkiller.

The coordinated but separately filed lawsuits were part of a wave of similar actions taken by [states](#) and municipalities throughout the United States in connection with an [opioid](#) drug abuse crisis that costs thousands of lives a year and has increased heroin addiction.

"My office is holding Purdue Pharma accountable for fueling the nation's opioid epidemic by deceptively marketing [prescription painkillers](#) including OxyContin when it knew their drugs were potentially dangerous," Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said.

Attorneys general of five other states—Nevada, Florida, North Carolina, North Dakota and Tennessee—also filed lawsuits against Purdue Pharma on Tuesday.

Florida sued additional companies, including Endo Pharmaceuticals and several drug distributors.

A bipartisan group of 41 state attorneys general also is conducting an investigation into whether opioid drug manufacturers and distributors broke the law.

In October, President Donald Trump described the opioid crisis as a national public health emergency. An estimated 2.4 million Americans are addicted to narcotics including prescription painkillers and heroin.

There were more than 42,000 opioid overdoses nationwide in 2016, and a death toll that has quadrupled over the last two decades, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Pop icon Prince and rocker Tom Petty are among

the most high profile victims.

Purdue Pharma said in February that it had told its salespeople to no longer encourage doctors to prescribe anti-pain medications such as OxyContin.

The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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