

Canada's Ontario province says will sue opioid makers

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Canada's most populous province of Ontario on Monday announced plans to sue opioid makers to recover health care costs related to the deadly addiction epidemic.

Ontario's attorney general, Caroline Mulroney, said the province will join a lawsuit launched last year by British Columbia against more than 40 opioid manufacturers and wholesalers.

"The [opioid crisis](#) has cost the people of Ontario enormously, both in terms of lives lost and its impact on [health care](#)'s front lines," Mulroney said.

She unveiled legislation to set up the [legal action](#) "to battle the ongoing opioid crisis and hold manufacturers and wholesalers accountable for their roles in it."

More than 10,000 Canadians have died of opioid-related overdoses since 2016, according to government figures. Combatting the crisis is estimated to have cost Ottawa nearly Can\$400 million (US\$300 million).

Historically, opioid overdose deaths—mainly from the powerful painkiller fentanyl—were concentrated among [drug addicts](#).

But many victims became addicted to prescribed painkillers before turning to street drugs and others were experimenting with [recreational drugs](#) for the first time.

Alberta, British Columbia and Ontario have been the hardest hit provinces but the epidemic has affected every part of the country.

The British Columbia suit named opioid manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors as defendants—including Purdue, whose popular OxyContin drug has been blamed for triggering the crisis.

"These opioid manufacturers and wholesalers failed to warn doctors and the public of the dangers of opioids and marketed them as safer and less addictive than other medications when they were not," Ontario alleged in a statement.

Mulroney said Ontario intends to invest any award from the suit in mental health and addiction services.

Neither British Columbia nor Ontario have yet said how much they would be seeking in damages.

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