

**STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
**First, Second and Third Judicial Districts**

Offices of District Attorneys General  
Barry Staubus, Tony Clark, Dan Armstrong



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Whitney Yarber  
Phone: 423.793.1351  
Email: [whitney@corporatepr.com](mailto:whitney@corporatepr.com)

**Northeast Tennessee Attorneys General File Suit  
Against Opioid Manufacturers**

*Filing seeks to raise awareness of addiction epidemic in Northeast Tennessee*

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. — The district attorneys general of Tennessee’s First, Second and Third Judicial Districts jointly filed a lawsuit today against prescription opioid manufacturer Purdue Pharma L.P., its related companies, Mallinckrodt PLC and Endo Pharmaceuticals.

Filed in Sullivan County Circuit Court in Kingsport, Tennessee, the lawsuit also names a fourth plaintiff, Baby Doe by and through his Guardian Ad Litem, along with Center Pointe Medical Clinic, LLC, and two convicted opioid dealers as additional defendants.

“Tennessee has the second-highest rate of opioid addiction in the nation, as noted in the lawsuit, and Sullivan County is ground zero for opioid addiction in our state,” says Barry Staubus, district attorney general for Tennessee’s Second Judicial District. “This region has experienced devastating consequences as a result of the opioid epidemic. Too many of our citizens’ lives have been turned upside down as a result of opioid abuse, and far too many have actually lost their lives from an overdose.

“In addition, opioid addiction presents a tremendous financial burden for our region, resulting in increased costs to each of our counties’ policing, health care, rehabilitation, housing and criminal justice systems,” Staubus says. “We believe there is a direct correlation between Northeast Tennessee’s opioid epidemic and Purdue Pharma’s fraudulent claims in their marketing of OxyContin® to the medical community, and it is our intent to hold them accountable for the damage they have inflicted upon our region.”

The lawsuit alleges that:

- Purdue Pharma embarked on a fraudulent campaign to convince physicians that OxyContin created minimal risk of addiction;

- As Purdue’s marketing efforts demonstrated success in the form of rapid increases in opioid prescriptions, Mallinckrodt, Endo Pharmaceuticals and other opioid manufacturers joined Purdue in its fraudulent scheme;
- Purdue’s efforts and those of the other defendants to mislead doctors and the public about the need for, and addictive nature of, opioid drugs led to an opioid epidemic, created an environment for thousands of individuals in Tennessee to become addicted to opioids, and fueled a dramatic increase in Sullivan County, Tennessee, in the number of individuals exposed to, and addicted to, OxyContin, Roxicodone®, Opana ER and other opioids, and;
- The police departments, schools, district attorneys’ offices, hospitals, doctors, insurance companies, and taxpayers of the state of Tennessee and Sullivan County will bear the financial burden of Purdue’s fraudulent campaign for decades to come.

“For many years, Purdue Pharma has inaccurately promoted OxyContin as being an appropriate medication for chronic pain, and being less likely than other pain medications to cause addiction,” says J. Gerard Stranch, IV, managing partner for Nashville, Tennessee-based law firm Branstetter, Stranch & Jennings, PLLC. “Their aggressive marketing of this product has resulted in an opioid epidemic that is ravaging Tennessee, causing immense suffering to those born addicted to opioids, and costing millions of dollars to local governments forced to deal with the aftermath.”

Tennesseans’ addiction to opioids has created a secondary epidemic impacting the state’s newborns. According to the Tennessee Department of Health, from Jan. 1, 2017, through April 1, 2017, approximately 48 of every 1,000 births in Sullivan County were Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) cases. Children born with NAS experience agonizing withdrawal symptoms as their bodies emerge from the influence of drugs.

“We have seen a huge increase in the number of babies born with NAS as a direct result of opioid addiction,” says Lisa Carter, CEO of Niswonger Children’s Hospital. “This has become a nationwide epidemic that is most widespread right here in Northeast Tennessee.”

According to the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the average cost of care for babies born with NAS is roughly 10 times more than babies born without NAS. The average cost to stabilize an NAS newborn is nearly \$63,000, while the average cost for a non-NAS newborn is approximately \$7,200. For the entire state of Tennessee, the care for 660 babies born with NAS cost \$41.5 million for most of 2013, compared to \$4.79 million for the same number born without NAS.

The lawsuit demands judgment against the defendants for damages resulting from breaches of statutory and common law, seeks to award restitution to the plaintiffs, and an injunction to stop the flood of opioids to the region.

For additional facts and information surrounding this issue, as well as a full copy of the lawsuit, please visit [www.sullivanbabydoe.com](http://www.sullivanbabydoe.com).

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