

CPM Helps County of San Mateo File Suit Against Opioid Manufacturers Over Opioids Flooding the County

The County's Lawsuit Alleges that the Sackler Family (owners of Purdue) Were Hands-on in Marketing and Selling OxyContin, Ground Zero in the Opioid Epidemic

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The County of San Mateo filed suit today against **20 opioid manufacturers**—including **Purdue Pharma, Endo Health Solutions, Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Cephalon, Johnson & Johnson and Janssen Pharmaceuticals**. The lawsuit breaks new ground in also naming members of the **billionaire Sackler family** as defendants.

The County of San Mateo's suit against manufacturers of opioids follows on the heels of the County's 2018 suit against opioid distributors. Both cases seek to recover costs incurred by the County in addressing the opioid epidemic.

John C. Beiers, County Counsel, stated, "Our job is to protect the residents of San Mateo County, including public funds – we would not be doing our job if we did not take steps to address the opioid epidemic impacting our county, including holding the corporate bad actors accountable for their part in this tragedy."

The suit alleges that the defendant opioid manufactures have created a public nuisance by manufacturing billions of opioid pills that have flooded local communities, including San Mateo County.

The County of San Mateo's suit details the involvement of members of the billionaire Sackler family in sparking the opioid crisis through Purdue's OxyContin sales. The Sackler family owns Purdue and defendant Richard Sackler was an inventor of OxyContin. The complaint alleges that members of the Sackler family are intimately involved in sale of OxyContin. The complaint notes that the family's control was so

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Practice Areas

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complete that one Purdue Pharma sales official complained about Sackler family micromanagement of the company's sales and marketing activities.

According to the most recent data available, **97 San Mateo County residents died in 2017 from drug-related causes**. In recent years, opioids accounted for **almost half of scheduled drug prescriptions** and there were **hundreds of thousands of opioid prescriptions** filled in San Mateo County.

Joe Cotchett, of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, the outside firm representing the County, said “the opioid litigation is the biggest public health nuisance case in the history of the United States – when all is said and done this case will be more significant than tobacco litigation.”

Anne Marie Murphy, of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, added that “unlike cigarettes, opioids can kill indiscriminately – families are losing teenagers and young adults as well as spouses and parents.”