

County of San Mateo Files Suit Against McKinsey For its Role in Opioids Flooding the County

Lawsuit Alleges that McKinsey Consulting Company Fueled the Opioid Epidemic by Helping Drug Companies Push Opioids into Local Communities
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The County of San Mateo filed suit today against McKinsey & Company, Inc. and McKinsey-related entities, alleging they strategically helped opioid manufacturers increase drug sales and tamp down negative press from those who lost loved ones to the deadly crisis.

The suit alleges that the McKinsey defendants served as marketing advisor to a number of opioid manufacturers (including Purdue Pharma, manufacturer of Oxycontin), and in this role helped counter the “emotional message” from the families of overdose victims and advised Purdue on how to “turbocharge” the sale of opioids.

As detailed in the complaint, in just one year, over 24 million opioid pills were prescribed and filled for San Mateo County residents – equal to 43 pills for every resident over 18 years old. Dozens of people die each year in San Mateo County from opioid overdoses.

The lawsuit is the first lawsuit by a county in California in the newly created national Multi-District Litigation (MDL) proceeding pending before Judge Charles R. Breyer in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California.

The suit against McKinsey follows on the heels of the County’s 2018 suit against opioid distributors and 2019 suit against opioid manufacturers. All three cases seek to recover costs incurred by the County in addressing the opioid epidemic.

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John C. Beiers, San Mateo County Counsel, said,

“the opioid epidemic has touched the lives of so many in San Mateo County, every death and every addiction is a tragedy – further, the epidemic has cost our county millions of dollars – we take our job of protecting the residents of San Mateo County seriously, this lawsuit is a continuation of our efforts to pursue the corporate bad actors who have caused the opioid epidemic.”

Joe Cotchett, of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, the law firm representing the County, said,

“The County of San Mateo has again taken a leadership role in pursuing those who are responsible for the opioid epidemic – the opioid litigation is the biggest public health drug case in the history of our State. Our complaint alleges that McKinsey played a significant role in fueling the crisis our county faces.”

Anne Marie Murphy, of the Cotchett firm, added that

“Counties in California are the frontlines of the fight against the opioid epidemic. Counties provide addiction treatment, law enforcement, court services and social services to opioid dependent children and parents. The McKinsey lawsuit is part of a many-year effort by the County of San Mateo to pursue those that are responsible for the epidemic.”