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KANE AMONG FIVE ILLINOIS COUNTIES TO SUE PRESCRIPTION OPIOID PAINKILLER MAKERS LAWSUITS FILED TODAY IN ILLINOIS COURTS

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Kane County, along with DuPage, Lake, McHenry and Will counties in Illinois today filed lawsuits against some of the nation's largest pharmaceutical companies and physicians over the aggressive and fraudulent marketing of prescription opioid painkillers.

This corporate-caused drug epidemic is being fought by countless Illinois families and has led to thousands of overdoses and hundreds of deaths in 2017 alone.

In the individual county complaints filed this morning in Illinois state court, the five counties seek relief including compensatory and punitive damages for the millions of dollars they spend each year to combat drug-related crimes and the public nuisance created by the drug companies' deceptive marketing campaign. In addition to monetary damages, the counties seek to enjoin the defendants and prohibit them from their continued unfair and deceptive acts and practices.

The defendants in the lawsuits for DuPage, Kane, McHenry and Will counties are: Purdue Pharma L.P.; Purdue Pharma, Inc.; The Purdue Frederick Company, Inc.; Abbott Laboratories; Abbott Laboratories, Inc.; Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc.; Cephalon, Inc.; Johnson & Johnson; Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Janssen Pharmaceutica, Inc.; Endo Health Solutions Inc.; Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Dr. Perry Fine; Dr. Scott Fishman; and Dr. Lynn Webster.

"Over the last six years in Kane County 257 people died from opiate use. That's more than all of the gang and domestic violence murders and reckless homicides over the same period," Kane County State's Attorney Joe McMahon said.

"Opioid addiction affects every resident of Kane County. Opioid addiction translates into higher healthcare costs, higher crime rates, more complex social issues, and lower workplace productivity. It destroys lives and it tears apart families. It has created a debt that is being paid by our neighbors, our families and our friends, every single day. The increased costs are being borne by small businesses, school districts,

law enforcement, public health officials and taxpayers, and it's time that everyone in the supply chain from manufacturers to distributors to the sales people who have pushed this poison into our community are held accountable."

According to Illinois Department of Public Health data, opioids contributed to nearly 1,200 overdose deaths in Illinois in 2016. The IDPH reports that more Illinoisans died from an opioid-related drug overdose (due to heroin and prescription opioid pain relievers) in 2014 than from homicide or motor vehicle crashes. Illinois is one of 14 states that has seen an 8.3 percent increase in overdose deaths.

- In 2015, the counties experienced an estimated 237 opioid-related deaths
 - DuPage County – approximately 51 deaths
 - Kane County – approximately 35 deaths
 - Will County – approximately 53 deaths
 - McHenry County – approximately 28 deaths
 - Lake County – approximately 70 deaths

Kane County, like many Illinois counties, has seen a rise in the number of deaths and overdoses related to opioids. County Coroner Rob Russell, who is part of the Chicagoland Area Opioid Task Force, found that Kane County had 27 total drug deaths in 2012. By 2016, the county had 45 opioid overdose deaths.

Apart from the human toll, the crisis has financially strained county services provided to residents and employees. Human services, social services, court services, law enforcement services, the coroner and health services, including hospital, emergency and ambulatory services, have been severely impacted by the crisis. For example, as a direct and foreseeable consequence of the defendants' egregious conduct, the counties have paid, and continue to pay, millions of dollars for health-care costs stemming from prescription opioid dependency.

These costs include unnecessary and excessive opioid prescriptions, substance abuse treatment services, ambulatory services, emergency department services, and inpatient hospital services, among others. The defendants' conduct has caused the counties to incur substantial economic, administrative and social costs relating to opioid addiction and abuse, including criminal justice costs, victimization costs, child protective services costs, lost productivity costs, and education and prevention program costs, among others.

The lawsuit alleges the defendants sought to create a false perception among physicians, patients, health care providers and health care payers that using opioids to treat chronic pain was safe for most patients and that the drugs' benefits outweighed the risks. This was allegedly perpetrated through a civil conspiracy involving a coordinated, sophisticated and highly deceptive (unbranded to evade the extensive regulatory framework governing branded communications) promotion and marketing campaign that began in the late 1990s and became more aggressive around 2006. Specifically, the complaints detail how the defendants allegedly poured significant financial resources into generating articles, continuing medical education courses and other materials, conducting sales visits to doctors, and supporting a network of professional societies and advocacy groups supporting the long-term use of opioids.