

January 11, 2018

Honorable Brad Schimel
Attorney General
P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Attorney General Schimel,

Since 2013, the State Legislature has committed more than \$14 million to combatting Wisconsin's opioid epidemic through Heroin Opioid Prevention and Education (H.O.P.E) legislation. Of course, this crisis has cost the state much more than that in increased costs for law enforcement, hospitalizations and emergency room visits, foster care placements and other services to children and families, first responders, court services, and other costs to various state departments.

During the last few months, two thirds of all counties in Wisconsin have filed or authorized the filing of lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies over "the aggressive and fraudulent marketing of prescription opioid painkillers that has led to this drug epidemic in the state and throughout the nation." Additionally, seven states have filed litigation of their own in federal courts.

Opioid overdose deaths have almost doubled in Wisconsin from 5.9 deaths per 100,000 residents in 2006 to 10.7 deaths per 100,000 residents in 2015. The number of opioid related hospital visits in Wisconsin, which include both inpatient hospitalizations and emergency department visits, has also doubled over that time period. Statewide, a total of 1,824 individuals died from opioid overdoses between 2013 and 2015.

While pharmaceutical companies have profited from their arguably deceptive and fraudulent marketing of dangerous prescription drugs, countless Wisconsinites have lost their lives. Meanwhile, the taxpayers of Wisconsin have been left on the hook for the high cost of the opioid epidemic to our state.

We respectfully request that you join the growing number of states, Wisconsin counties, and local units of government nationwide by filing a lawsuit against prescription opioid manufacturers on behalf of the State of Wisconsin. It is time to hold these pharmaceutical companies accountable for what they have cost our state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response.