

TALLAHASSEE — Attorney General Pam Bondi filed an action in state court May 15 against some of the nation's largest opioid manufacturers and distributors for their role in the national opioid crisis. The complaint names as defendants opioid manufacturers Purdue Pharma L.P., Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc., Cephalon Inc., and Allergan plc and related companies, and opioid distributors AmerisourceBergen Drug Corporation, Cardinal Health Inc., McKesson Corporation, and Mallinckrodt LLC and related companies.

"We are in the midst of a national opioid crisis claiming 175 lives a day nationally and 15 lives a day in Florida, and I will not tolerate anyone profiting from the pain and suffering of Floridians," said Attorney General Bondi. "The complaint I filed today, seeks to hold some of the nation's largest opioid manufacturers and distributors responsible for their role in this crisis and seeks payment for the pain and destruction their actions have caused Florida and its citizens."

The opioid manufacturers allegedly used a campaign of misrepresentations and omissions about the use of opioids to doctors and consumers in order to increase prescriptions and opioid use, including false statements about the addictive nature of opioids and omissions of the severe risks posed by taking opioids. The opioid distributors allegedly shipped inordinately high volumes of opioids to customers in Florida and failed to report these suspicious orders of opioids, thereby fueling widespread diversion of opioids throughout the state.

The lawsuit alleges, among other things, that the opioid manufacturers used front organizations and key opinion leaders to promote false messages about opioids. This conduct was particularly abhorrent because the front organizations and key opinion leaders appeared to be neutral advocates for the use of opioids to treat chronic pain but were actually paid mouthpieces of the manufacturers.

The distributors failed in their duties under Florida law to stop the suspiciously high orders of opioids they received. Instead, the distributors placed profit over safety and continued filling the suspicious opioid orders. In the complaint filed in Pasco County Circuit Court, the Attorney General's Office alleged that the defendants' actions violated the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act, the Florida RICO Act, and violated common law public nuisance and negligence. The complaint seeks damages, injunctive relief, restitution, and civil penalties for defendants' conduct.

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