

Ohio sues five drugmakers over role in opioid crisis

May 31 2017

The US state of Ohio on Wednesday sued five major producers of prescription opioid medications, accusing them of lying about the deadly risks the painkillers—at the center of a nationwide addiction crisis—posed to public health.

The suit seeks to hold the companies accountable for harm to patients by blocking the drugs' allegedly deceptive marketing, as well as awarding compensation for the state and for consumers.

Prescription [opioid](#) overdoses have hit record levels in the United States, killing more than 15,000 people in 2015 alone, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. West Virginia has also targeted drugmakers over the crisis.

In a statement, Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine said the drugmakers had knowingly caused patients to become addicted, with many addicts then switching to heroin and other drugs.

"These drug manufacturers led prescribers to believe that opioids were not addictive, that addiction was an easy thing to overcome, or that addiction could actually be treated by taking even more opioids," DeWine said.

"They knew they were wrong but they did it anyway."

State officials say parts of Ohio are believed to be the hardest hit in the

nation by the current opioid addiction crisis, with 2.3 million patients, or about 20 percent of the population, having been prescribed an [opioid drug](#) last year.

The suit names Purdue Pharma, which markets drugs such as OxyContin and Dilaudid, Johnson & Johnson, Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Endo Health Solutions and Allergan.

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Citation: Ohio sues five drugmakers over role in opioid crisis (2017, May 31) retrieved 24 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-05-ohio-sues-drugmakers-role-opioid.html>

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