

Some states, towns skeptical over proposed opioid settlement

August 31 2019, by Susan Haigh And Geoff Mulvihill



In this August 2018 file photo, family and friends who have lost loved ones to OxyContin and opioid overdoses protest outside Purdue Pharma headquarters in Stamford, Conn. Reports emerging about a possible financial settlement in 2019 with Purdue Pharma, the company that has come to symbolize the nation's opioid epidemic, suggests the settlement amount won't come anywhere near what the national crisis has cost. (AP Photo/Jessica Hill, File)

An offer from OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma and the Sackler family to settle some 2,000 lawsuits over their contribution to the national opioid crisis is receiving growing pushback from state and local officials who say the proposed deal doesn't include enough money or accountability.

Connecticut Attorney General William Tong on Friday called for the company, which is headquartered in the state, to be forced out of the opioid business altogether.

"At a minimum, Connecticut demands that Purdue be broken up and shut down, and that its assets be liquidated," Tong said in a statement.

He said he wants the controlling Sackler [family](#) to pay billions of dollars "they siphoned out of Purdue," with the money going toward addiction research and treatment.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey said she wants any [settlement](#) to include more money than the \$10 billion to \$12 billion offered by Purdue and the \$3 billion offered from the Sacklers, an amount that represents just a portion of the family's fortune. Much of their money which appears to be overseas.

"We owe it to families in Massachusetts and across the country to hold Purdue and the Sacklers accountable, ensure that the evidence of what they did is made public, and make them pay for the damage they have caused," Healey said in a statement.



In this July 17, 2019, file photo, Eddie Davis steps up to the gravestone in Coalton, Ohio, of his son Jeremy, who died from the abuse of opioids. Reports emerging about a possible financial settlement in 2019 with Purdue Pharma, the company that has come to symbolize the nation's opioid epidemic, suggests the settlement amount won't come anywhere near what the national crisis has cost. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)



In this Nov. 2, 2017, file photo, medics with the Cincinnati Fire Department work to keep a possible overdose victim awake after administering Naloxone while responding to a call at a gas station in downtown Cincinnati. Reports emerging about a possible financial settlement in 2019 with Purdue Pharma, the company that has come to symbolize the nation's opioid epidemic, suggests the settlement amount won't come anywhere near what the national crisis has cost. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)



This Feb. 19, 2013, file photo shows OxyContin pills arranged for a photo at a pharmacy in Montpelier, Vt. Reports emerging about a possible financial settlement in 2019 with Purdue Pharma, the company that has come to symbolize the nation's opioid epidemic, suggests the settlement amount won't come anywhere near what the national crisis has cost. (AP Photo/Toby Talbot, File)



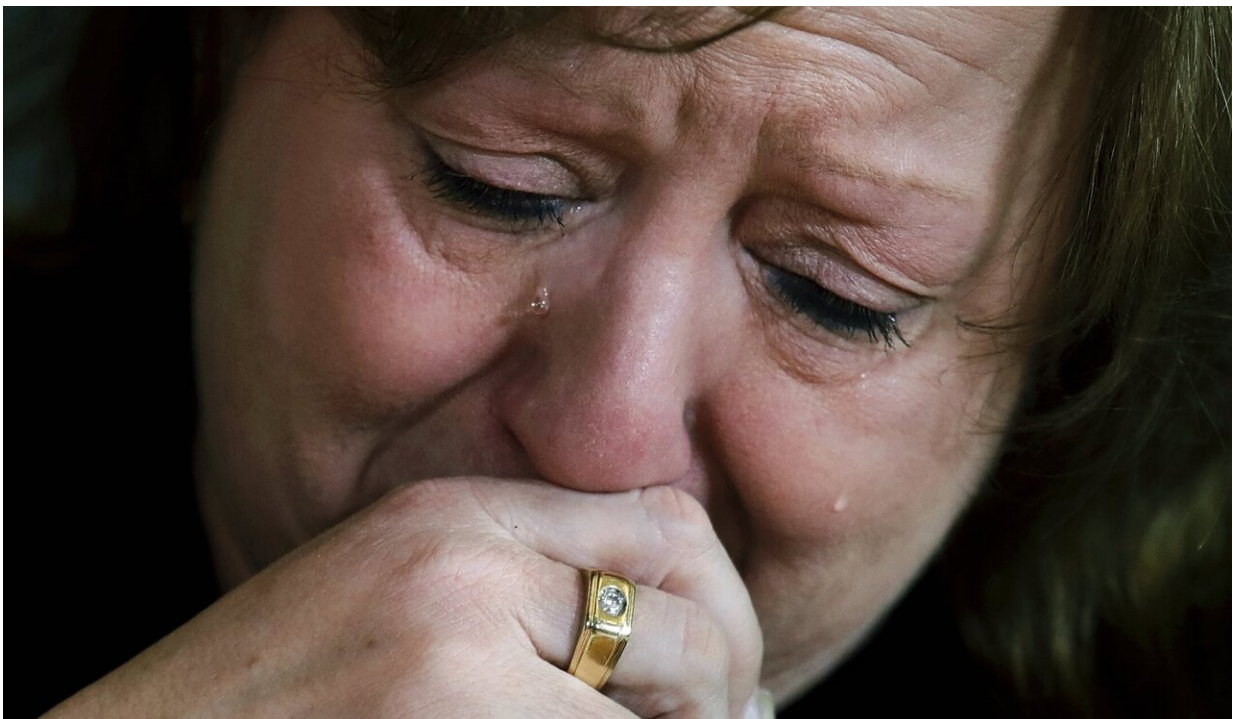
This June 5, 2019, file photo, shows equipment carried by the Philadelphia Fire Department's new opioid response team that pairs paramedics with social service case workers to help steer overdose survivors into treatment, in Philadelphia. Reports emerging about a possible financial settlement in 2019 with Purdue Pharma, the company that has come to symbolize the nation's opioid epidemic, suggests the settlement amount won't come anywhere near what the national crisis has cost. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke, File)

The company and the family did not answer questions Friday about criticism of the settlement proposal, under which Purdue would file for bankruptcy and transform itself into a "public benefit trust corporation." The trust's profits from drug sales would go to the plaintiffs under the company's settlement offer.

Purdue also has been considering filing for [bankruptcy protection](#) on its own, an action that would upend the settlement talks involving state attorneys general and lawyers representing nearly [local governments](#) around the country.

Over the past few years, nearly every state and about 2,000 local and tribal governments have sued over the toll of the opioid epidemic. Purdue is a defendant in most of the lawsuits and members of the Sackler family are named in several, including lawsuits in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

The federal litigation is being overseen by a judge in Cleveland, who has been pushing for a national settlement before the first trial starts in October. That is proving difficult.



In this December 2018 file photo, Terri Osborne, a police dispatcher in Hudson,

Mass., cries during a group support meeting as she talks about the loss of her son to an opioid overdose in July 2018. Reports emerging about a possible financial settlement in 2019 with Purdue Pharma, the company that has come to symbolize the nation's opioid epidemic, suggests the settlement amount won't come anywhere near what the national crisis has cost. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa, File)

As details of Purdue's settlement offer became public this week, some [local government officials](#) said it wasn't good enough.

In Delbarton, West Virginia, Mayor Elmer Spence's son and nephew are two of the more than 400,000 people in the U.S. who have died from opioid overdoses since 2000. If Purdue's offer of a settlement is accepted, the town would receive less than \$50,000.

"That's a drop in the bucket for what it's really cost this community," he said of a crisis that has driven up costs for police, ambulances and courts.

He said residents in the town of roughly 500 people have grown accustomed to losing loved ones: "I mean it's really a slap in the face."

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Citation: Some states, towns skeptical over proposed opioid settlement (2019, August 31) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-08-states-towns-skeptical-opioid-settlement.html>

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