

Baltimore City wins \$45 million settlement with Allergan, seeks billions in suits vs. other opioid distributors

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Baltimore went its own way and has won the first leg of a potentially billion-dollar lawsuit against opioid distributors.

Pharmaceutical company Allergan will pay the city a \$45 million settlement within 30 days for its role in pumping pharmacies with drugs, according to a news release from the mayor's office Monday morning.

If the city had joined other state and local governments as defendants in a global settlement with the company, the payoff would have been \$7 million over seven years.

"This is such an unprecedented recovery for the city," City Solicitor Ebony Thompson said. "We had a lot of pressure to basically sell out our residents for the global settlement, and this shows that would have been wrong."

According to state data, the city averaged over 866 [opioid-related deaths](#) per year from 2017 to 2021, more than two per day.

The city's settlement is also larger than the settlements Allergan reached with Maryland—\$38 million over seven years. In that case, the state argued Allergan misled patients about the relative safety of an extended-release morphine product by marketing it as an option that was safer than other opioids.

An attorney representing Allergan did not respond to a request for comment Sunday. The city is still suing Johnson & Johnson, McKesson, Cardinal Health, AmerisourceBergen, Walgreens, CVS, Teva, former Insys CEO John Kapoor, members of the Sackler family and others.

Those companies and executives could be forced to pay much more.

Thompson said Allergan's two opioid drugs, Kadian and Norco, made up less than half of 1% of the opioids sent to Baltimore pharmacies. The remaining defendants were responsible for over 80% of the opioids targeted at Baltimore pharmacies, according to the news release,

confirming the multibillion-dollar value of the city's entire case.

According to [court records](#), a trial is scheduled for Sept. 16 in front of Baltimore City Circuit Court Judge Lawrence Fletcher-Hill.

In its [settlement agreement](#) with Allergan, the city has committed \$5 million to a peer navigator program and \$5 million to Charm City Care Connection, local initiatives helping victims, according to the release. According to state data, between 2017 and 2021, opioid-related deaths in Baltimore City accounted for 38.38% of total opioid-related deaths in the state among about 10% of the population.

Mayor Brandon Scott said in the news release that the city will create a board to oversee how opioid settlement money is spent.

"We are fully aware of the devastating toll that the actions of these defendants have taken on our city, and we have shown our commitment to ensuring that they pay their fair share to tackle the harms they have left in the wake of their greed," he said.

The city worked with outside counsel from the national law firm Susman Godfrey.

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