



Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing
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October 3, 2019

Honorable Robert Drain
United States Bankruptcy Judge
United States Bankruptcy Court
Southern District of New York
300 Quarropas Street
White Plains, New York 10601-4140

Re: Purdue Pharma L.P., et al, Case No. 19-23649 (RDD)

Dear Judge Drain:

Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing, an organization with a mission to reduce opioid-related morbidity and mortality caused by overprescribing of opioid analgesics, is strongly opposed to the settlement offer from Purdue Pharma. We are especially concerned about the provision that would provide funds to states from sales of future Purdue products, including OxyContin.

The opioid addiction epidemic, devastating communities and families across the country, was caused by aggressive opioid prescribing. Opioid prescribing began to soar in the 1990s because of a deceptive, multi-faceted campaign that minimized the risks of opioids, especially the risk of addiction, and exaggerated the benefits of long-term use. Among opioid manufacturers, Purdue Pharma played a leading role in sponsoring this campaign and continued to do so, even when it became clear that its actions had led to hundreds of thousands of deaths.

Despite recent reductions, per capita opioid consumption in the United States remains much higher than every other country on Earth. This means that the incidence rate (new cases per year) of opioid addiction remains high and the number of Americans suffering from opioid addiction continues to rise. State efforts to bring the opioid crisis to an end must include programs to promote more cautious opioid prescribing. Settlement funds that rely on future opioid sales will place states in a position of benefitting financially from aggressive opioid prescribing at a time when they should be promoting reductions in opioid prescribing. We believe this inherent conflict of interest will impede state responses to this urgent public health crisis. For this reason, we strongly support the decision by many states to reject the proposed settlement offer.

Sincerely,

Andrew Kolodny, MD
Executive Director
Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing