

**CONFIDENTIAL – SUBJECT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER - FILED UNDER SEAL**

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
PROVIDENCE, SC

SUPERIOR COURT

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND, by and through,  
PETER F. KILMARTIN, ATTORNEY GENERAL,  
*Plaintiff,*

C.A. NO.: PC2018-4555

v.

PURDUE PHARMA L.P.; PURDUE PHARMA  
INC.; THE PURDUE FREDERICK COMPANY,  
INC.; RHODES PHARMACEUTICALS L.P.;  
RHODES TECHNOLOGIES; RHODES  
TECHNOLOGIES INC.; RICHARD S. SACKLER;  
INSYS THERAPEUTICS, INC.; JOHN N.  
KAPOOR; TEVA PHARMACEUTICALS USA,  
INC.; CEPHALON, INC.; MALLINCKRODT  
PLC; MALLINCKRODT, LLC; SPECGX, LLC;  
CARDINAL HEALTH, INC.; MCKESSON  
CORPORATION d/b/a MCKESSON DRUG  
COMPANY; and AMERISOURCEBERGEN  
DRUG CORPORATION,  
*Defendants;*

**AMENDED COMPLAINT**

SUPERIOR COURT  
FILED  
HENRY S. KINCH, JR.  
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## **I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

1. The State of Rhode Island, by and through its Attorney General, Peter F. Kilmartin, (“Rhode Island” or “State”), brings this action pursuant to his statutory and common law authority to redress Purdue Pharma, L.P.’s, Purdue Pharma Inc.’s, the Purdue Frederick Company’s (together, “Purdue”); Rhodes Pharmaceuticals, L.P.’s, Rhodes Technologies, Rhodes Technologies Inc.’s (“together, “Rhodes”); Richard S. Sackler (“Sackler,” and with Purdue and Rhodes, the “Purdue Defendants”); Insys Therapeutics, Inc.; John N. Kapoor (“Kapoor,” and with Insys Therapeutics, Inc., “Insys”); Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc., Cephalon, Inc. (with Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc., “Teva”); Mallinckrodt plc; Mallinckrodt, LLC, SpecGX, LLC (together, “Mallinckrodt,” and with the Purdue Defendants, Insys, and Teva, the “Marketing Defendants”); McKesson Corporation d/b/a McKesson Drug Company (“McKesson”) Cardinal Health, Inc.’s (“Cardinal”), and AmerisourceBergen Drug Corporation (“AmerisourceBergen,” and with McKesson and Cardinal, the “Distributor Defendants”) campaign to unlawfully promote and distribute opioids in Rhode Island.

2. Prescription opioids are narcotics. They are derived from and possess properties like opium and heroin, they are regulated as controlled substances, and they cause addiction. While opioids can work to dampen the perception of pain, they also can create an addictive, euphoric high. At higher doses, they can slow the user’s breathing, causing potentially fatal respiratory depression. Most patients receiving more than a few weeks of opioid therapy will experience often prolonged withdrawal symptoms—including severe anxiety, nausea, headaches, tremors, delirium, and pain—if opioid use is delayed or discontinued. When using opioids continuously, patients grow tolerant to their analgesic effects—requiring progressively higher doses and increasing the risks of withdrawal, addiction, and overdose.

3. Because the medical community recognized these dangers, they originally used opioids cautiously and sparingly, typically only for short-term acute pain—where brief use limited the need for escalating doses and the risk of addiction—or for palliative (end-of-life) care.<sup>1</sup> This country’s history of opioid use and addiction had counseled against widespread use of these drugs. Rampant prescription of “patent medicines” containing opium, morphine, and later heroin, led to widespread addiction following the Civil War and the turn of the last century, where addiction rates as high as 1 in 200 Americans eventually led to the adoption of the 1914 Harrison Narcotics Tax Act, which imposed quotas on the importation of opium derivatives.<sup>2</sup> More recently, heroin and prescription drug outbreaks followed the Vietnam War. Both illegal heroin and abuse of then-popular prescription opioids like Numorphan<sup>3</sup> and Percodan<sup>4</sup> thrived in the 1970s. Given this experience with opioids’ addictive properties, the market for prescription opioids was sharply restricted as a matter of doctors’ practice and public health and safety.

4. As Purdue developed OxyContin in the mid-1990s, it knew that to expand its market and profits, it needed to change the perception of opioids to permit and encourage the use of opioids more liberally. This required persuading prescribers and patients that opioids were appropriate for prolonged use for more widespread, less severe pain conditions, like back pain, migraines, and arthritis. Purdue helped cultivate a narrative that pain was undertreated and pain

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<sup>1</sup> In this Amended Complaint, “chronic pain” means non-cancer pain lasting three months or longer.

<sup>2</sup> Erick Trickey, “Inside the Story of America’s 19<sup>th</sup> Century Opiate Addiction,” *Smithsonian.com*, January 4, 2018, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/inside-story-americas-19th-century-opiate-addiction-180967673/>

<sup>3</sup> Jon Fauber and Kristina Fiore, “Abandoned Painkiller Makes A Comeback, *Medpage Today*, May 10, 2015

<sup>4</sup> “Unwitting Addicts Discover That The Painkiller Percodan Bring An Agony of Its Own,” *People*, November 19, 1979, *available at*: <http://people.com/archive/unwitting-addicts-discover-that-the-painkiller-percodan-brings-an-agony-of-its-own-vol-12-no-21/>

treatment should be a higher priority for health care providers. This paved the way for increased prescribing of opioids for chronic pain. As part of this strategy, Purdue misrepresented the risk of addiction for pain patients as modest, manageable, and outweighed by the benefits of opioid use.

5. The Purdue Defendants aggressively marketed their opioids to physicians in Rhode Island and nationwide, knowing that its in-person marketing, or “detailing” to doctors was effective. Numerous studies indicate that this marketing impacts prescribing habits, with face-to-face detailing having the greatest influence.

6. Between the 1990s and 2011, prescriptions of oxycodone, an active ingredient in opioid drugs manufactured by the Purdue Defendants more than doubled in the United States, much of which was sold in generic forms by Defendants Rhodes, Teva, and Mallinckrodt. During the same time period, opioid prescriptions increased some 31% from approximately 1.6 million to approximately 2.2 million. According to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Fact Sheet, “[i]n 2014, more than 240 million prescriptions were written for prescription opioids, which is more than enough to give every American adult their own bottle of pills.”

7. The Purdue Defendants’ deceptive marketing efforts continued over the next several years, eventually coming under investigation by a number of state and federal entities. In 2007, Purdue and three of its executives pleaded guilty to federal criminal charges for deceptively marketing OxyContin, and had to reimburse Rhode Island for \$1.2 million in costs incurred by the Medicaid Assistance Program from 1995 to 2005. As laid out in its plea agreement, Purdue systematically misrepresented the risk of addiction, including promising that opioid addiction occurred in less than 1% of patients, and that opioids were not addictive when

legitimately prescribed. This was how Purdue explained away what doctors had previously believed about opioids: it was not that opioids were not addictive, but rather opioids would not addict patients under a doctor's care.

8. Rather than reforming its opioid marketing to comply with the law after its 2007 plea and settlements, The Purdue Defendants continued to mislead and obfuscate. They spent hundreds of millions of dollars nationally on promotional activities and materials that continued to falsely deny or trivialize the risk of addiction and overstate the benefits of opioids. The Purdue Defendants continued to deceptively market opioids to prescribers through advertising, websites, and in-person sales calls. The Purdue Defendants also relied upon continuing medical education ("CME") seminars, non-credit education programs, treatment guidelines, and other publications and programs by patient advocacy groups, professional associations, and physicians that were flawed and misleading, but seemed independent and therefore credible.

9. Through these efforts, the Purdue Defendants, and later, Teva and Mallinckrodt, were able to persuade prescribers that, even though opioids were addictive, that risk could be allayed by doctors carefully supervising their use by appropriate patients. Part of the Manufacturing Defendants' message was that doctors should treat the right patients: legitimate patients who took the drugs as directed (orally) to treat their pain, rather than abusers seeking to snort or inject the drugs for recreation. By defining the class of individuals who should not receive opioids as only these abusers, the Manufacturing Defendants gave prescribers a false sense of security that they could safely prescribe opioids to patients they trusted without fear that these patients would become addicted.

10. When faced with a rising tide of opioid addiction, overdose, and death – precisely the risks that they denied in their marketing – the Purdue Defendants falsely promoted its abuse-



deterrent opioids as preventing abuse and diversion and “safe.” They knew, and evidence showed, that the “abuse-deterrent” features of their opioids could be easily defeated, did not affect oral use, which is the most common means of abuse, and increased harmful outcomes, like injection or conversion to heroin. Purdue’s marketing was intended to, and did, reassure prescribers who became concerned about addiction that they not only could continue to prescribe opioids, but also in fact needed to switch to their brands of opioids, thus preserving and expanding its market.

11. In the same vein, the Purdue Defendants also misrepresented its efforts to rein in the diversion and abuse of opioids, while privately failing to report suspicious prescribing. Upon information and belief, based on the reporting of an industry-wide practice, Purdue paid reimbursements known as “chargebacks” to wholesale distributors, and thereby obtained information about where their drugs were going as they progressed from wholesalers to retailers and down the supply chain. The Manufacturing Defendants also had access to detailed prescribing data, which they monitored regularly to target and monitor their marketing efforts. Purdue failed to report suspicious orders or retailers from 2014 to the present, and upon information and belief, even earlier, that information obtained from the chargeback and prescribing data, as well as their own observations, would have revealed.

12. The Purdue Defendants’ scheme was resoundingly successful. Chronic opioid therapy—the prescribing of opioids long-term to treat chronic pain—has become a commonplace, and often first-line, treatment. Deceptive marketing caused prescribing not only of their opioids, but also of opioids as a class, to skyrocket. In 2015, Purdue reaped an estimated \$2.4 billion in revenue, virtually all of it from opioids. Since its launch in 1996, OxyContin alone has generated \$35 billion in sales.

13. Opioids are now among the most prescribed classes of drugs. In 2015 on an average day, more than 620,000 opioid prescriptions were dispensed in the U.S. While previously a small minority of opioid sales was for chronic opioid therapy, today between 80% and 90% of opioids (measured by weight) used are for chronic pain.

14. Prescriptions within Rhode Island exceeded the national average from 2006 through 2012, reaching a high in 2012 of 83.2 opioid prescriptions per 100 people.<sup>5</sup> Over this time period, Rhode Island's Medicaid program (the Medical Assistance Program) incurred over \$6 million to pay for prescriptions of Purdue branded opioids, additional funds for Purdue's generic opioids. From July 2013 to February 2018, as well, the Medical Assistance Program paid over \$350,000 for Rhodes Pharmaceuticals opioids, and suffered additional damages for the costs of providing and using opioids long-term to treat chronic pain. From May 23, 2014 through March 4, 2016, the State's Medical Assistance Program spent over \$175,000 to pay for prescriptions of Insys opioids, as well. The Medical Assistance Program also paid \$443,348 for Mallinckrodt branded and generic opioids from July 2013 to February 2018. The Medical Assistance Program also spent over \$15 million over the last four years for medication assisted treatment—a number that will continue to grow.

15. Once a mass market for prescription opioids had been created, Distributor Defendants flooded it. Distributor Defendants are responsible for delivering opioids marketed and made by the opioid makers to pharmacies throughout the country. Distributor Defendants have a duty under state law to report and to not ship suspicious orders of controlled substances including orders of opioids that exceed reasonable volume or frequency, into Rhode Island. Yet, Distributor Defendants have supplied opioids in quantities that they knew or should have known

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/maps/rxrate-maps.html>

exceed any legitimate market for opioids—even the wider market for chronic pain—and ignored red flags of suspicious orders of these drugs in Rhode Island. Upon information and belief, they routinely failed to do so, deepening the crisis of opioid abuse, addiction and death in the state.

16. Indeed, rather than compassionately helping patients, this explosion in opioid use—and Defendants’ profits—has come at the expense of chronic pain patients. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) concluded in 2016 that “for the vast majority of [chronic pain] patients, the known, serious, and too-often-fatal risks [of opioids] far outweigh the unproven and transient benefits.”<sup>6</sup> As the then CDC director concluded: “We know of no other medication routinely used for a nonfatal condition that kills patients so frequently.”<sup>7</sup>

17. As a direct result of Defendants’ conduct, the nation is now swept up in what the CDC called a “public health epidemic” and what the U.S. President deemed a “public health emergency.”<sup>8</sup> The increased volume of opioid prescribing and distribution correlates directly to skyrocketing addiction, overdose, and death; black markets for diverted prescription opioids; and a concomitant rise in heroin and fentanyl abuse by individuals who could no longer legally acquire—or simply could not afford—prescription opioids.

18. Every day, 115 people die across the country from an opioid-related overdose and over 1,000 patients are given emergency treatment for misusing them. Many others are swept into a cycle of addiction and abuse with which they will struggle their entire lives. As many as 1 in 4 patients who receive prescription opioids long-term for chronic pain in primary care settings

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas R. Frieden et al., *Reducing the Risks of Relief — The CDC Opioid-Prescribing Guideline*, 374 New Eng. J. Med. 1501-1504 (2016).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> The New York Times, Trump Declares Opioid Crisis a ‘Health Emergency’ but Requests No Funds, October 26, 2017, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/us/politics/trump-opioid-crisis.html>.

struggle with addiction. In 2014, almost 2 million Americans were addicted to prescription opioids and another 600,000 to heroin. From 1999 to 2015, more than 194,000 people died in the U.S. from overdoses related to prescription opioids—more than the number of Americans who died in the Vietnam War.

19. Studies have shown that at least 8-12%, and as many as 30-40% of long-term users of opioids experience problems with addiction. In March 2016, the FDA emphasized the “known serious risk[] of ... addiction”—“even at recommended doses”—of all opioids.”<sup>9</sup> That same month, after a “systematic review of the best available evidence” by a panel excluding experts with conflicts of interest, the CDC published the CDC Guideline For Prescribing Opioids For Chronic Pain (the “CDC Guideline”). The CDC Guideline noted that “[o]pioid pain medication use presents serious risks, including overdose and opioid use disorder” (a diagnostic term for addiction).<sup>10</sup> The CDC also emphasized that “continuing opioid therapy for 3 months substantially increases risk for opioid use disorder.”<sup>11</sup> An additional study showed that nearly 60% of patients who used opioids for 90 days continued to use opioids five years later.<sup>12</sup>

20. The CDC also noted that patients receiving high doses of opioids (e.g., doses greater than 100 mg morphine equivalent dose (“MED”) per day) as part of long-term opioid therapy are approximately nine times more likely to suffer overdose from opioid-related causes than those on low doses. As compared to available alternative pain remedies, scholars have

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<sup>9</sup> FDA announces safety labeling changes and postmarket study requirements for extended-release and long-acting opioid analgesics, FDA (Sep. 10, 2013); see also FDA announces enhanced warnings for immediate-release opioid pain medications related to risks of misuse, abuse, addiction, overdose and death, FDA (Mar. 22, 2016), <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm491739.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> CDC Guideline at 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 21.

<sup>12</sup> Bradley C. Martin *et al.*, Long-Term Chronic Opioid Therapy Discontinuation Rates from the TROUP Study, 26 J. Gen. Internal. Med. 1450 (2011).

suggested that tolerance to the respiratory depressive effects of opioids develops at a slower rate than tolerance to opioids' analgesic effects. Accordingly, the practice of continuously escalating doses to match pain tolerance can, in fact, lead to overdose even where opioids are taken as recommended.

21. Because Manufacturing Defendants convinced prescribers to disregard these known risks, in Rhode Island, the age-adjusted overdose rate in 2015 of 28.2 per 100,000 people ranks fifth in the nation. From 2014-2015, Rhode Island experienced a 24% one-year change in overdose deaths, the third highest change in America. The rate of deaths from *synthetic* opioids like fentanyl ranked third in the nation in 2015. From 2011 to 2016, as well, Rhode Island saw a 303% increase in overdose fatalities.<sup>13</sup>

22. While opioids have been diverted through illicit prescribing and sales, it is the regular, legitimate prescribing of opioids that created and fueled this crisis. A study of 254 accidental opioid overdose deaths in Utah found that 92% had been receiving prescriptions from health care providers for chronic pain. Indeed, the majority of patients seeking treatment for opioid and heroin addiction nationally, and upon information and belief in Rhode Island, started with an opioid prescription for pain.<sup>14</sup> This market required both Purdue's efforts to position opioids as the "gold standard" of pain treatment, and Distributor Defendants' efforts to ensure pharmacies were able to dispense the heightened demand for opioids beyond what was and is reasonable and legitimate use.

23. Defendant Insys, however, went outside of legitimate channels to promote its

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<sup>13</sup> See Accidental Drug Overdose Deaths Occurring in Rhode Island by Month/Year, <http://www.health.ri.gov/data/drugoverdoses/>

<sup>14</sup> See Theodore J. Cicero, *et al.*, "The Changing Face of Heroin Use in the United States: A Retrospective Analysis of the past 50 Years," *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2014;71(7):821–826.

opioids. It simply paid doctors to prescribe its opioid Subsys, a fentanyl spray approved only for cancer patients, including one prescriber in Rhode Island who in 2017 pleaded guilty to federal kickback and conspiracy charges and was recently sentenced to more than four years in prison. This prescriber, Jerrold Rosenberg, M.D., a physiologist in North Providence received a - hundreds and thousands of dollars over the span of 3 years for promotional talks at high-end restaurants for prescribing the company's products. In some cases, no events actually took place, with Insys sales representatives simply forging signatures of attendees to make the event appear legitimate.

24. Having induced Rosenberg to prescribe Subsys to his patients, Insys also had to persuade commercial payors to cover the drug, which they were often reluctant to do given the drug's high cost and approval only for certain types of cancer pain. Insys, upon information and belief at the direction of Kapoor, established an entity called the "Insys Reimbursement Center," which, upon information and belief, passed along false statements to the insurers' prior authorization committees in order to obtain coverage. Insys would obtain patients' confidential medical records by having patients "opt-in" to the reimbursement program, which means they would know these patients were not appropriate Subsys patients. Insys's and Rosenberg's actions cost Rhode Island insurers over \$750,000, according to his plea agreement. One patient who testified at his sentence said Rosenberg "made [her] a junkie," and refused to act when she came to him with concerns about addiction.

25. Accordingly, Rhode Island brings this action to hold Defendants accountable for their conduct; and seeks disgorgement, restitution, abatement, damages, and injunctive and equitable relief to redress the harm and halt these unfair, deceptive, and unlawful practices.

## II. PARTIES

### A. PLAINTIFF

26. The State is a sovereign state of the United States. Peter F. Kilmartin is the duly elected Attorney General and is the chief law enforcement officer and attorney for the State. The Attorney General brings this action on behalf of the State in accordance with his statutory and common law authority and pursuant to common law authority; and by the Rhode Island False Claims Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-4(a).

### B. DEFENDANTS

27. Purdue Pharma, L.P. is a limited partnership organized under the laws of Delaware. Purdue Pharma Inc. is a New York corporation with its principal place of business in Stamford, Connecticut and the general partner of Purdue Pharma, L.P. The Purdue Frederick Company is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Stamford, Connecticut. These Defendants are collectively referred to herein as “Purdue.”

28. Purdue manufactures, promotes, sells, and distributes opioids such as OxyContin, MS Contin, Dilaudid and Dilaudid-HP, Butrans, Hysingla ER in the United States and in Rhode Island.<sup>15</sup> OxyContin is Purdue’s best-selling opioid. Since 2009, Purdue’s annual sales of OxyContin have fluctuated between \$2 billion and \$3 billion. Nationwide, OxyContin constitutes roughly 25% of the entire market, by spending, for prescription opioids. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

29. Rhodes Pharmaceuticals, L.P. is a limited partnership organized under the laws of Delaware with its principal place of business in Coventry, Rhode Island. Rhodes

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<sup>15</sup> Purdue has also obtained approval to market Targiniq ER (oxycodone hydrochloride and naloxone hydrochloride) in 2014, but it has not actively marketed it.

Pharmaceuticals L.P. has one general partner, Rhodes Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; and one limited partner, Coventry Technologies L.P., which holds Rhodes Pharmaceuticals, L.P.'s shares. Coventry Technologies L.P. is a Delaware limited partnership with its principal place of business in Stamford, Connecticut. Its general partner is Purdue Pharma Inc. Rhodes Technologies Inc. is a corporation organized under the laws of Delaware with its principal place of business in Coventry, Rhode Island. Rhodes Technologies is a Delaware general partnership with its principal place of business in Coventry, Rhode Island. Rhodes Technologies Inc. is the general partner of Rhodes Technologies and is a subsidiary of Purdue Pharma, L.P. (Rhodes Technologies and Rhodes Pharmaceuticals are collectively referred to as "Rhodes"). Rhodes manufactures and distributes generic opioids, including authorized generic versions of OxyContin and Butrans. Rhodes Technologies also manufactures the active pharmaceutical ingredient in drugs including Purdue's OxyContin.<sup>16</sup> Among the drug products manufactured by Rhodes is buprenorphine, a drug used to treat opioid dependence. Together, Rhodes and Purdue accounted for 14.4 million opioid prescriptions in the United States in 2016.<sup>17</sup>

30. Richard S. Sackler, M.D. is a resident of Austin, Texas and a board member of Purdue Pharma, L.P. and Rhodes Technologies. Sackler was President of Purdue Pharma from 1999 to 2003 and Co-Chairman in 2003 through 2014. Upon information and belief, Sackler joined Purdue in 1971 as an assistant to his father, Dr. Raymond Sackler, who was then CEO of Purdue. Defendant Sackler served as head of Purdue's Marketing Department and of its Research & Development Departments. From 1995-2003, Defendant Sackler oversaw the launch of OxyContin. Sackler, upon information and belief, has long held an ownership interest

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<sup>16</sup> At various times, Defendant Mallinckrodt also supplied Purdue with oxycodone.

<sup>17</sup> David Crow, "Billionaire Sackler family owns second opioid drugmaker," *Financial Times*, Sept. 9, 2018 at <https://www.ft.com/content/2d21cf1a-b2bc-11e8-99ca-68cf89602132>



in Purdue and Rhodes, and continues to hold such an ownership interest. Through his decisions and directives, Sackler knowingly caused the promotion and sales of Purdue and Rhodes opioids in Rhode Island, from the sales messages passed directly to Rhode Island prescribers by Purdue sales representatives, to the third-party articles and webinars made available to Rhode Island prescribers by Purdue. Sackler is the listed inventor on a number of patents assigned to Purdue or Rhodes, including U.S. Patent 9,3861,628, *Buprenorphine-Wafer for Drug Substitution Therapy* (January 9, 2018), a patent issued, *inter alia*, to Sackler and assigned by Sackler and his co-inventors to Rhodes covering a drug for “drug substitution therapy in drug-dependent human subjects.” In other words, having caused the opioid epidemic, Sackler, through his companies, is poised to profit off of its abatement.

31. Insys Therapeutics, Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Chandler, Arizona. Insys’ principal product and source of revenue is Subsys, a transmucosal immediate-release formulation (“TIRF”) of fentanyl, contained in a single-dose spray device. Subsys was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) solely for the treatment of breakthrough cancer pain. In 2016, Insys made approximately \$330 million in net revenue from Subsys. Insys promotes, sells, and distributes Subsys throughout the United States and in Rhode Island. Several Insys executives and sales managers have been indicted, including sales representatives and regional managers responsible for sales into Rhode Island.

32. John N. Kapoor is a resident of Lake Forest, Illinois, and the former Chairman of Insys. In 2013, *Forbes* Magazine listed him as a billionaire following the success of Insys’s initial public offering. In 2017, Kapoor was arrested and charged, along with other Insys executives, with multiple felonies in connection with an alleged conspiracy to bribe practitioners to prescribe Subsys and defraud insurance companies by the Office of the United States Attorney

for the District of Massachusetts. He at all times personally directed the activities of Insys, including the payment of fraudulent kickbacks to prescribers in Rhode Island, and directed the misrepresentations made to third party payors to obtain off-label coverage of Subsys.

33. Defendant Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc. (“Teva USA”) is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in North Wales, Pennsylvania. Teva USA was in the business of selling generic opioids, including a generic form of OxyContin from 2005 to 2009. Teva USA is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Ltd. (“Teva Ltd.”), an Israeli corporation.

34. Defendant Cephalon, Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Frazer, Pennsylvania. In 2011, Teva Ltd. acquired Cephalon, Inc. and Teva took over the marketing and promotion of Actiq and Fentora, two TIRF products approved only for breakthrough pain in opioid-tolerant patients with cancer.

35. Teva has promoted its TIRF opioids in Rhode Island, including making payments to 12 different prescribers in Rhode Island, none of whom are oncologists.<sup>18</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

36. Defendant Mallinckrodt plc is an Irish public limited company with its headquarters in Staines-Upon-Thames, Surrey, United Kingdom. Mallinckrodt plc was incorporated in January 2013 for the purpose of holding the pharmaceuticals business of Covidien plc, which was fully transferred to Mallinckrodt plc in June of that year. Although it has undergone name changes over time, Mallinckrodt, plc has a long history and describes itself

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<sup>18</sup> Teva also marketed to Jerrold Rosenberg, providing him with food and beverages on 4 separate occasions in 2014 and 2015.

as originally founded by Gustavo Mallinckrodt, Otto Mallinckrodt and Edward Mallinckrodt in 1867. Mallinckrodt plc also operates under the registered business name Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, with its U.S. headquarters in Hazelwood, Missouri. Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals has responded to a letter from the FDA concerning Xartemis XR, and the Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals logo appears on marketing and/or purportedly educational materials. Mallinckrodt plc was also a signatory to the July 10, 2017 Administrative Memorandum of Agreement with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration outlining its obligations to report suspicious scheduled drug orders. Defendant Mallinckrodt LLC is a Delaware limited liability company with its headquarters in Hazelwood, Missouri. Mallinckrodt manufactures, markets, sells and distributes pharmaceutical drugs throughout the United States, and in Rhode Island. Mallinckrodt is the largest U.S. supplier of opioid pain medications and among the top ten generic pharmaceutical manufacturers in the United States, based on prescriptions. Since June 28, 2013, it has been a wholly owned subsidiary of Mallinckrodt, plc. Prior to June 28, 2013 Mallinckrodt, LLC was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Covidien plc. Defendant SpecGX LLC, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Mallinckrodt plc and was incorporated in Delaware on November 14, 2016.<sup>19</sup> SpecGX, upon information and belief, currently manufactures and sells in Rhode Island opioids that were previously manufactured by Mallinckrodt LLC.

37. Mallinckrodt manufactures and markets two branded opioids: Exalgo, which is extended-release hydromorphone, sold in 8, 12, 16, and 32 mg dosage strengths, and Roxicodone, which is oxycodone, sold in 15 and 30 mg dosage strengths. In 2009, Mallinckrodt

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<sup>19</sup> The State has listed SpecGX as a Defendant for the purpose of ensuring that the State can obtain appropriate injunctive relief.

Inc., a subsidiary of Covidien plc, acquired the U.S. rights to Exalgo. The FDA approved Exalgo for treatment of chronic pain in 2012. Mallinckrodt further expanded its branded opioid portfolio in 2012 by purchasing Roxicodone from Xanodyne Pharmaceuticals. In addition, Mallinckrodt developed Xartemis XR, an extended-release combination of oxycodone and acetaminophen, which the FDA approved in March 2014, and which Mallinckrodt discontinued in August 2015. Mallinckrodt promoted its branded opioid products with its own direct sales force.

38. While it has sought to develop its branded opioid products, Mallinckrodt has long been a leading manufacturer of generic opioids. Mallinckrodt estimated that in 2015 it received approximately 25% of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s (“DEA”) entire annual quota for controlled substances that it manufactures. Mallinckrodt also estimated, based on IMS Health data for the same period, that its generics claimed an approximately 23% market share of DEA Schedules II and III opioid and oral solid dose medications. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] According to a report in *60 Minutes*, between 2008 and 2012, Mallinckrodt sold two-thirds of the oxycodone in the State of Florida (or 500 million pills).

39. In 2017, Mallinckrodt entered into a settlement with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”) after the DEA’s investigation revealed that “Mallinckrodt knew about the diversion [of oxycodone] and sold excessive amounts of the most highly abused forms of oxycodone, 30 mg and 15 mg tablets, placing them into a stream of commerce that would result in diversion[,]” much of which came from the supply to Florida. Portions of this oversupply were diverted, upon information and belief, to Rhode Island. To settle these claims, Mallinckrodt paid a fine of \$35 million.

40. Cardinal Health, Inc. (“Cardinal”) describes itself as a “global, integrated health care services and products company,” and is the fifteenth largest company by revenue in the United States, with annual revenue of \$121 billion in 2016. Cardinal distributes pharmaceutical drugs, including opioids, throughout the country and in Rhode Island. Cardinal is an Ohio corporation and is headquartered in Dublin, Ohio. Based on Defendant Cardinal’s own estimates, one of every six pharmaceutical products dispensed to U.S. patients travels through the Cardinal Health network.

41. McKesson Corporation (“McKesson”) is fifth on the list of Fortune 500 companies, ranking immediately after Apple and ExxonMobil, with annual revenue of \$191 billion in 2016. McKesson distributes pharmaceutical drugs, including opioids, throughout the country and in Rhode Island. McKesson is incorporated in Delaware and its principal place of business is in San Francisco, California.

42. In January 2017, McKesson paid a record \$150 million to resolve an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice (“DOJ”) for failing to report suspicious orders of certain drugs, including opioids, and for failing to maintain effective controls against diversion at its distribution centers.

43. AmerisourceBergen Drug Corporation (“AmerisourceBergen”) is a wholesaler of pharmaceutical drugs that distributes opioids throughout the country and in Rhode Island. AmerisourceBergen is the eleventh largest company by revenue in the United States, with annual revenue of \$147 billion in 2016. AmerisourceBergen’s is incorporated in Delaware and its principal place of business is Chesterbrook, Pennsylvania.

44. The Distributor Defendants comprise the “big three” and dominate the wholesale distribution market, including in Rhode Island.

### **III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

45. Subject-matter jurisdiction is authorized by R.I. Gen. Laws § 8-14.

46. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants because Defendants transact business in Rhode Island and/or have the requisite minimum contacts with Rhode Island necessary to constitutionally permit the Court to exercise jurisdiction, with such jurisdiction also being proper under Rhode Island's long arm rule. Super.R.Civ.P. 4. Among other business activities in Rhode Island, the Manufacturing Defendants have employed people in Rhode Island to visit Rhode Island doctors in their Rhode Island offices for the purpose of delivering marketing messages and encouraging such doctors to write prescriptions for Manufacturing Defendants' products. The Distributor Defendants transact business in Rhode Island by selling the Manufacturer Defendants' opioids to retail pharmacies located in Rhode Island.

47. Rhode Island has general jurisdiction over the Rhodes Defendants as their principal place of business is in Rhode Island.

48. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant Sackler because he personally directed Purdue to conduct the deceptive or unfair acts or practices alleged herein that took place and caused harm in Rhode Island and/or because he has the requisite minimum contacts with Rhode Island necessary to permit this court to exercise jurisdiction. Business activities that Sackler directed include Purdue's employment of a substantial number of sales representatives nationwide, including in Rhode Island, to visit doctors in their local offices for the purpose of delivering marketing messages and encouraging such doctors to write prescriptions for Purdue's opioid products. Consequently, Purdue's opioids are prescribed throughout Rhode Island by prescribers who have been exposed to Purdue's deceptive marketing, and with Sackler's knowledge and subject to his control, Purdue has caused its opioids to be distributed throughout Rhode Island and ultimately taken by consumers in Rhode

Island. In addition, he personally has transacted business in Rhode Island relating to the subject matter of this lawsuit by directing the operations of Defendant Rhodes; and by assigning patents to Defendant Rhodes, including U.S. Patent No. 9,3861,628, *Buprenorphine-Wafer for Drug Substitution Therapy*.

49. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant Kapoor because he personally directed the commission of tortious acts in Rhode Island, including payments to Jerrold Rosenberg to induce him to prescribe Subsys.

50. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 8-2-27.

#### **IV. PURDUE ILLEGALLY MISREPRESENTED THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF ITS OPIOIDS**

51. Until the mid-1990s, opioids were widely thought to be too addictive for use for chronic pain conditions, which required long-term use of the drugs at increasingly high doses as patients developed tolerance. For these conditions, the risks of addiction and other side effects outweighed any benefit from the drugs. For the last two decades, and at Sackler's direction, Purdue has sought—with a marketing campaign that was as successful as it was deceptive—to turn that consensus on its head, primarily by denying, distorting, or failing to disclose the risk of addiction and overstating the benefits of using opioids long-term. The result was that by the mid-2000s, the medical community had abandoned its prior caution, and opioids were entrenched as an appropriate—and often the first—treatment for chronic pain conditions. Purdue not only marketed opioids for chronic pain conditions, but also targeted primary care physicians (along with nurse practitioners and physician assistants), who were most likely to see patients with chronic pain conditions and least likely to have the training and experience to evaluate both Defendants' marketing and patients' pain conditions.

52. Before Sackler directed Purdue's launch of OxyContin in 1996, opioids were

widely recognized as highly addictive, and therefore suitable only for severe pain and short-term use. There was no evidence that opioids were appropriate or could be used safely on a long-term, outpatient basis.

53. However, the market for acute pain and end-of-life pain was relatively small. Thus, when Purdue launched OxyContin, it sought to broaden its use to chronic pain such as lower back pain, arthritis, and headaches. These conditions are more prevalent, and they last longer, providing Purdue with more prescriptions per patient and, thus, sustained revenue.

54. A successful launch of OxyContin was particularly important to Sackler because he knew there would soon be generic competition for its morphine extended release drug, MS Contin. In fact, Sackler was aggressive about finding other applications for the “Contin” extended release technology when he and Purdue came up with the idea of applying it to oxycodone, an older drug used in short-acting opioids like Percocet.

55. Thus, Purdue’s deceptive marketing created a cadre of doctors who looked for pain and treated it with opioids, which created an even broader cohort of patients who expected and required opioids. This laid the groundwork for today’s epidemic of opioid addiction, injury, and death.

A. PURDUE FALSLEY TRIVIALIZED, MISCHARACTERIZED, AND FAILED TO DISCLOSE THE KNOWN, SERIOUS RISK OF ADDICTION.

56. Purdue has relied heavily on their sales representatives to convey its marketing messages and materials to prescribers in targeted, in-person settings. Purdue made more visits to more Rhode Island prescribers than any other opioid maker, based on publicly-available data from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Defendant Sackler testified that sales representatives were the main way that Purdue promoted its opioids, and that regular visits from the sales force was the best way to induce prescribers to start prescribing Purdue’s opioids and to



keep doing so.

57. The U.S. Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee recently issued a Staff Report which noted the link between drug maker payments to prescribers and physician prescribing practices. It found that “a clear link exists between even minimal manufacturer payments and physician prescribing practices.”<sup>20</sup> The Report quotes *ProPublica* findings that “doctors who received industry payments were two to three times as likely to prescribe brand-name drugs at exceptionally high rates as others in their specialty.”

58. To ensure that sales representatives delivered the desired messages to prescribers, Manufacturing Defendants directed and monitored their respective sales representatives through detailed action plans, trainings, tests, scripts, role-plays, supervisor tag-alongs, and review of representatives’ “call notes” from each visit. Call notes are kept and submitted by sales representatives to reflect their interactions during sales visits.) They relied upon prescriber-identifiable data, as well, to target the largest prescribers of their products. Sales representatives also had incentives to promote their products aggressively, as their compensation was based on prescriptions, not how well they informed prescribers of the true qualities of their drugs.<sup>21</sup> These Defendants likewise required their sales representatives to use sales aids reviewed, approved, and supplied by the companies and forbade them to use promotional materials not approved by the company’s marketing and compliance departments. They further ensured marketing consistency nationwide through national and regional sales representative training. Thus, upon information

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<sup>20</sup> Staff Report, Fueling an Epidemic, Insys Therapeutics and the Systemic Manipulation of Prior Authorization.

<sup>21</sup> Although sales representatives are typically compensated based on sales of their company’s branded products, Purdue compensated its sales representatives based on the volume of OxyContin as well as Rhodes’s authorized generic versions. Thus, Rhodes’s authorized generic fills can be attributed to Purdue’s marketing of OxyContin, as well as to Purdue’s promotion of opioids as a class through its unbranded marketing.

and belief, their sales forces in Rhode Island carried out national marketing strategies, delivering centrally scripted messages and materials that were consistent across the country.<sup>22</sup>

59. Purdue was aware of the strength of its in-person marketing. The effects of sales calls on prescribers' behavior is well-documented in the literature, including a 2009 study correlating the nearly ten-fold increase in OxyContin prescriptions between 1997 and 2002 to Purdue's doubling of its sales force and trebling its sales calls.<sup>23</sup> A 2017 study found that physicians ordered fewer promoted brand-name medications and prescribed more cost-effective generic versions if they worked in hospitals restricted sales representatives' access to prescribers.<sup>24</sup> Another study compared different marketing strategies and found that sales representatives have the strongest effect on driving drug utilization—even more than drug pricing.<sup>25</sup> Doctor meetings with sales representatives have also been found to be related to changes in doctors' prescribing practices and requests to add the drugs to their hospitals' formularies.<sup>26</sup> In short, Purdue's sales staff making "detail visits" had the most powerful effect on prescriptions, and contact with sales representatives is the most consistent predictor of physicians' adoption of new products. One reason for their efficacy is that prescribers are often unaware that sales representatives' visits change their prescribing.

60. Purdue also used "key opinion leaders" ("KOLs")—experts in the field who were

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<sup>22</sup> Unless otherwise noted, allegations based on "information and belief" are based on the uniformity of Defendants' nationwide strategy and practices, which would reasonably be expected to apply in Rhode Island in the same manner as elsewhere.

<sup>23</sup> Art Van Zee, *The Promotion and Marketing of OxyContin: Commercial Triumph, Public Health Tragedy*, 99 Am. J. Pub. Health 221–227 (2009).

<sup>24</sup> Ian Larkin *et al.*, *Association Between Academic Medical Center Pharmaceutical Detailing Policies and Physician Prescribing*, 317 J. Am. Med. Ass'n 1785 (2017).

<sup>25</sup> Berdent ER, *et al.* *Information, marketing and pricing in the US antiulcer drug market*. Amer Econ Rev 1995, 85:101-105.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* citing Wazana A. *Physicians and the pharmaceutical industry: is a gift ever just a gift?* JAMA 2000;283:373-80.

especially influential because of their reputations and seeming objectivity—to deliver paid talks and continuing medical education programs (or “CMEs”) that provided information about treating pain and the risks, benefits, and use of opioids. These KOLs received substantial funding and research grants from these Defendants, and the CMEs were often sponsored by Defendants—giving them considerable influence over the messenger, the message, and the distribution of the program. Only doctors supportive of the use and safety of opioids for chronic pain received these funding and speaking opportunities, which were not only lucrative, but helped doctors build their reputations and bodies of work. One leading KOL, Dr. Russell Portenoy, subsequently acknowledged that he gave lectures on opioids that reflected “misinformation” and were “clearly the wrong thing to do.”

61. By 2000, Purdue had approximately 94,000 doctors on its physician call list. Purdue also recruited and paid respected health care professionals as “speakers” who presented Purdue-approved programs to other prescribers at lunch and dinner events. From 1996 to 2001, Purdue held more than 40 national conferences and more than 5,000 physicians, pharmacist, and nurses attended these speaker conferences. In addition to speaker programs, Purdue targeted doctors with “educational” programing and funded more than 20,000 pain-related educational programs through direct sponsorship or financial grants by July 2002, including, upon information and belief, programs attended by Rhode Island prescribers.

62. In addition to talks and CMEs, these KOLs served on the boards of patient advocacy groups and professional associations, such as the American Pain Foundation (“APF”) and the American Pain Society (“APS”), that were also able to exert greater influence because of their seeming independence. Purdue exerted influence over these groups by providing major funding directly to them, as well. According to data collected by the Senate Finance Committee,

Purdue gave over \$4 million to several of these organizations over the last five years alone.<sup>27</sup>

These organizations appeared to be neutral and independent, but in reality were used by drug companies to disseminate promotional messages, rendering them “front groups” for the opioid industry. These entities put out patient education materials and treatment guidelines that supported the use of opioids for chronic pain, overstated their benefits, and understated their risks. Purdue distributed these publications to Rhode Island prescribers or posted them on its website.

63. The advantage to a drug company of working with and through front groups is that the FDA does not regulate marketing funneled through third-parties or unbranded communications that do not describe specific products, directly or indirectly.

64. Purdue used its sales force and allied front groups to falsely promote its opioids as safe and effective to Rhode Island prescribers, as follows.

*1. Purdue Minimized and Mischaracterized The Risk of Addiction.*

65. To convince prescribers and patients that opioids are safe, Purdue deceptively represented that the risk of abuse and addiction is modest and manageable and limited to illegitimate patients, not those with genuine pain. This created the dangerously misleading impressions that: (1) patients receiving opioid prescriptions for chronic pain would not become addicted, (2) patients at greatest risk of addiction could be identified, (3) all other patients could safely be prescribed opioids, and (4) even high-risk patients could be prescribed opioids if closely managed.

66. Purdue deceptively undermined evidence that opioids are addictive by suggesting

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<sup>27</sup> Shortly it received a Senate Finance Subpoena in 2012, APF shut its doors citing “irreparable economic circumstances.” Upon information and belief, legislative scrutiny caused its pharmaceutical company donors to stop considering APF useful.

or stating that the risk of addiction is limited to specific, high-risk patients. According to Purdue, doctors can screen patients to identify those who are likely to become addicted, and therefore could safely prescribe to everyone else. One Rhode Island prescriber attended a Purdue-sponsored talk where the speaker said patients in true pain would not become addicted to opioids. Another internist in Lincoln reported that he felt that addiction risks were reduced in elderly patients, a misrepresentation Purdue did not correct. Purdue discounted general concerns or warnings regarding addiction by reassuring doctors that their patients would not become addicted. One former Purdue sales representative in another region confirmed Purdue's message that opioids were appropriate and safely prescribed to legitimate patients with actual pain. Upon information and belief, based on the uniformity of Purdue's practices, the same message was delivered to prescribers in Rhode Island. These assurances were false and unsafe, as prescribers cannot accurately predict which patients are at higher risk of addiction.

67. Purdue's sales representatives also failed to disclose to prescribers nationally, and upon information and belief, in the Rhode Island the difficulty of withdrawing from opioids. Discontinuing or delaying opioids can cause intense physical and psychological effects, including anxiety, nausea, headaches, and delirium, among others. This difficulty in terminating use is a material risk, which can leave many patients unwilling or unable to give up opioids and heightens the risk of addiction.

68. Purdue falsely portrayed "true" addiction in its narrowest form. Purdue's earliest marketing included claims that the risk of addiction was less than 1%, a claim that appeared in educational pamphlets and educational videos Purdue disseminated.<sup>28</sup> (Tragically, one of the

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<sup>28</sup> One video made by Purdue in 1998 entitled "I got my life back" is available online and features a physician testimonial stating the addiction rate is among pain patients who were

patients who appeared in the video claiming OxyContin did not “make him groggy” subsequently became addicted and died in a car accident after he blacked out.<sup>29</sup>) This claim that opioids were rarely addictive was purportedly based on a letter to the editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine* that relied on observation of notations in patient charts of hospital inpatients, not a systematic study.<sup>30</sup>

69. Providing *Relief, Preventing Abuse*, a pamphlet it published in 2011 for prescribers and law enforcement, shows pictures of the signs of injecting or snorting opioids—skin popping, track marks, and perforated nasal septa—under the heading “Indications of Possible Drug Abuse.” Purdue knew that opioid addicts who resort to these extremes are uncommon; they far more typically become dependent and addicted through oral use. According to briefing materials Purdue submitted to the FDA in October 2010, OxyContin was used non-medically by injection as little as 4% of the time.

70. These depictions misleadingly reassured doctors that, in the absence of those extreme signs, they need not worry that their patients are abusing or addicted to opioids. Purdue made *Providing Relief, Preventing Abuse* available to sales representatives to show to or leave with prescribers, including those in Rhode Island.

71. Purdue also disseminated misleading information about opioids and addiction through the American Pain Foundation. Purdue was APF’s second-biggest donor. Purdue grant

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treated by doctors is “much less than 1%” and opioids “should be used much more than they are for patients in pain.” See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Er78Dj5hyeI>

<sup>29</sup> Patrick Radden Keefe, “The Family That Built An Empire Of Pain,” *New Yorker* (October 30, 2017), <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/10/30/the-family-that-built-an-empire-of-pain>

<sup>30</sup> J. Porter & H. Jick, *Addiction Rare in Patients Treated with Narcotics*, 302(2) *New Eng. J. Med.* 123 (1980). Because it was a 1980 study, standards of care almost certainly would have limited opioids to acute or end-of-life situations, not chronic pain.

letters informed APF that Purdue’s contributions reflected the company’s effort to “strategically align its investments in nonprofit organizations that share [its] business interests.” Purdue also engaged APF as a paid consultant on various initiatives and deployed APF to lobby for its interests on Capitol Hill. Purdue’s and APF’s alignment of interests was expressed most forcefully in the fact that Purdue hired APF to provide consulting services on its marketing initiatives. Purdue and APF entered into a “Master Consulting Services” Agreement on September 14, 2011. That agreement gave Purdue substantial rights to control APF’s work related to a specific promotional project. Moreover, based on the assignment of particular Purdue “contacts” for each project and APF’s periodic reporting on their progress, the agreement enabled Purdue to be regularly aware of the misrepresentations APF was disseminating regarding the use of opioids to treat chronic pain in connection with that project. The agreement gave Purdue—but not APF—the right to end the project (and, thus, APF’s funding) for any reason. Even for projects not produced during the terms of this Agreement, the Agreement demonstrates APF’s lack of independence and willingness to harness itself to Purdue’s control and commercial interests, which would have carried across all of APF’s work.

72. *A Policymaker’s Guide to Understanding Pain & Its Management*, a 2011 APF publication that Purdue sponsored, claimed that pain generally had been “undertreated” due to “[m]isconceptions about opioid addiction.

73. Purdue also maintained a website from 2008 to 2015, *In the Face of Pain* that downplayed the risks of chronic opioid therapy. Purdue deactivated this website in October 2015 following an investigation by the New York Attorney General. Although it included the Purdue copyright at the bottom of each page, the site did not refer to any specific Purdue

products and cultivated the “impression that it [was] neutral and unbiased.”<sup>31</sup>

74. *In the Face of Pain* asserted that policies limiting access to opioids are “at odds with best medical practices” and encouraged patients to be “persistent” in finding doctors who will treat their pain. While a document linked from the website briefly mentioned opioid abuse, the site itself *never* mentioned the risk of addiction. At the same time, the website contained testimonials from several dozen physician “advocates” speaking positively about opioids. Eleven of these advocates received a total of \$231,000 in payments from Purdue from 2008 to 2013—a fact notably omitted from the site.<sup>32</sup>

75. Purdue’s efforts to trivialize the risk of addiction were, and remain, at odds with the scientific evidence.

2. *Purdue Falsely Described Addiction as Pseudoaddiction and Dangerously Encouraged Doctors to Respond to Aberrant Behavior by Prescribing More Opioids*

76. Purdue deceptively advised doctors to ignore signs of addiction as the product of an unfounded condition it called pseudoaddiction. Pseudoaddiction was a concept invented to foster the misconception that signs of addiction, including shopping for doctors willing to newly write or refill prescriptions for opioids or seeking early refills, reflected undertreated pain that should be addressed with more opioids—the medical equivalent of fighting fire by adding fuel.

77. Purdue, through its unbranded imprint *Partners Against Pain*<sup>33</sup>, promoted

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<sup>31</sup> Attorney General of the State of New York, *In the Matter of Purdue Pharma L.P.*, Assurance No.: 15-151 (August 19, 2015).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.*

<sup>33</sup> *Partners Against Pain* consists of both a website, styled as an “advocacy community” for better pain care, and medical education resources distributed to prescribers by the sales force. It has existed since at least the early 2000s and has been a vehicle for Purdue to downplay the risks of addiction from long-term opioid use. One early pamphlet, for example, answered concerns about OxyContin’s addictiveness by claiming: “Drug addiction means using a drug to get ‘high’ rather than to relieve pain. You are taking opioid pain medication for medical purposes. The medical purposes are clear and the effects are beneficial, not harmful.”



pseudoaddiction through at least 2013 on its website, including by disseminating the American Pain Society’s “Definitions Related to the Use of Opioids for the Treatment of Pain: “Even such behaviors as illicit drug use and deception can occur in the patient’s efforts to obtain relief. Pseudoaddiction can be distinguished from true addiction in that the behaviors resolve when pain is effectively treated.”

78. Mallinckrodt’s efforts to trivialize the risk of addiction were, and remain, at odds with the scientific evidence. As explained above, studies have shown that at least 8-12%, and as many as 30-40% of long-term users of opioids experience problems with addiction. Addiction can result from the use of any opioid, “even at recommended dose”<sup>34</sup> and the risk increases with chronic (more than three months) use.

79. The Federation of State Medical Boards (“FSMB”), a trade organization representing Rhode Island’s state medical board as well as others, finances opioid- and pain-specific programs through grants from Purdue. A 2004 version of the FSMB *Model Guidelines for the Use of Controlled Substances for the Treatment of Pain* (“FSMB Guidelines”), and the 2007 book adapted from them, *Responsible Opioid Prescribing*, advanced the concept of “pseudoaddiction.”

80. *Responsible Opioid Prescribing* was sponsored by Purdue. The FSMB website described the book as the “leading continuing medical education (CME) activity for prescribers of opioid medications.” In all, more than 6,000 copies of *Responsible Opioid Prescribing* were distributed in Rhode Island.

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<sup>34</sup> FDA announces safety labeling changes and postmarket study requirements for extended-release and long-acting opioid analgesics, FDA (Sept. 10, 2013); see also FDA announces enhanced warnings for immediate-release opioid pain medications related to risks of misuse, abuse, addiction, overdose and death, FDA (Mar. 22, 2016), <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm491739.htm>.

81. Another publication, APF’s *A Policymaker’s Guide* (2011) claimed, without basis, that “less than 1% of children treated with opioids become addicted” and perpetuated the concept of pseudoaddiction. Purdue provided substantial funding in the form of a \$26,000 grant to APF and closely collaborated with APF in creating *A Policymaker’s Guide*. On information and belief, based on Purdue’s close relationship with APF and the periodic reports APF provided to Purdue about the project, Purdue had editorial input into *A Policymaker’s Guide*. It is still available to Rhode Island prescribers online.<sup>35</sup>

82. Purdue also sponsored APF’s *Exit Wounds* (2009), a book aimed at veterans. This book includes a discussion of the concept of pseudoaddiction.

83. Purdue also promoted the concept of pseudoaddiction through Dr. Russell Portenoy, a leading KOL for Purdue and other opioid makers. In doing so, he popularized the concept and falsely claimed that pseudoaddiction is substantiated by scientific evidence.

84. The CDC Guideline rejects the concept of pseudoaddiction. The Guideline nowhere recommends that opioid doses be increased if a patient is not experiencing pain relief. To the contrary, the Guideline explains that “[p]atients who do not experience clinically meaningful pain relief early in treatment . . . are unlikely to experience pain relief with longer-term use,”<sup>36</sup> and that physicians should “reassess[] pain and function within 1 month” in order to decide whether to “minimize risks of long-term opioid use by discontinuing opioids” because the patient is “not receiving a clear benefit.”<sup>37</sup>

85. Within Rhode Island, Purdue’s sales representatives repeatedly promoted the

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<sup>35</sup> See American Pain Foundation., *A Policymaker’s Guide to Understanding Pain & Its Management* (2011), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/277603-apf-policymakers-guide> (last visited April 4, 2018).

<sup>36</sup> CDC Guideline at 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.* at 25.

baseless and misleading concept of pseudoaddiction. For example, after a luncheon with anesthesiology office staff in Providence, a Purdue representative reported the staff had not considered pseudoaddiction to be a distinct concept until told of it by the sales representative. At another event where the sales representatives talked about pseudoaddiction, the representative described the prescriber's reaction as "eye opening." As described below, prescribers who have received this misrepresentation subsequently wrote prescriptions that were paid for by Rhode Island's Medical Assistance Program.

*3. Overstated the Efficacy of Screening Tools*

86. Purdue falsely instructed prescribers and patients that addiction risk screening tools, patient contracts, urine drug screens, and similar strategies allow health care providers to safely prescribe opioids to patients, including patients predisposed to addiction, and failed to disclose the lack of evidence that these strategies will mitigate addiction risk. By using screening tools, these Defendants, advised that doctors could identify those who are likely to become addicted and could safely prescribe to everyone else. Thus, Purdue undermined general concerns or warnings regarding addiction by reassuring doctors that, despite the general warnings about addiction, their patients would not become addicted.

87. Such misrepresentations regarding the ability to safely prescribe opioids without the risk of addiction made health care providers more comfortable prescribing opioids to their patients, and patients more comfortable starting chronic opioid therapy. These misrepresentations were especially insidious because Purdue aimed them at general practitioners and family doctors who lack the time and expertise to closely manage higher-risk patients on opioids. Moreover, these misrepresentations reassured doctors that opioid addiction was the result of other prescribers failing to rigorously manage and weed out problem patients.

88. Purdue conveyed these "safe prescribing" messages through their in-person sales

calls to doctors. For example, Purdue sales representatives in Rhode Island also shared the *Partners Against Pain* “Pain Management Kit,” which contained several “drug abuse screening tools.” These included the “Opioid Risk Tool,” which is a five question, one-minute screening tool that relies on patient self-reporting to identify whether there is a personal history of substance abuse, sexual abuse, or “psychological disease,” ignoring the sensitivity of the topic and the nature of addiction, which make it unlikely that many patients can be counted on to share this information.

89. Purdue also promoted screening tools as a reliable means to manage addiction risk in CME programs and scientific conferences, which likely were attended by and were available to Rhode Island prescribers.

90. For example, Purdue sponsored a 2011 CME program titled *Managing Patients’ Opioid Use: Balancing the Need and Risk*. This presentation deceptively instructed prescribers that screening tools, patient agreements, and urine tests prevented “overuse of prescriptions” and “overdose deaths.”

91. Purdue also funded a 2012 CME program called *Chronic Pain Management and Opioid Use: Easing Fears, Managing Risks, and Improving Outcomes*. The presentation deceptively instructed doctors that, using screening tools, more frequent refills, and other techniques, high-risk patients showing signs of addictive behavior could be treated with opioids.

92. Purdue used its involvement in the College on the Problems of Drug Dependence (“CPDD”), which promotes scientific research and professional development to support addiction prevention professionals, to promote the idea that addiction risk can be managed. A Purdue employee served on the CPDD board of directors. Purdue presented an outsized number of talks—with very different messages from non-Purdue talks—at each CPDD conference. One

of Purdue’s consistent themes is that “bad apple” patients, not opioids, are the source of the addiction crisis, and that once those patients are identified doctors can safely prescribe opioids without addicting patients. Hundreds of addiction treatment specialists from across the country and, upon information and belief, prescribers from Rhode Island, attended these conferences.

93. Purdue’s efforts to convince doctors that they could confidently prescribe to pain patients who did not intend to become addicted or abuse drugs were misleading. As Defendants knew or should have known, sales to patients who doctor-shop (or visit multiple doctors to hide illicit use or overuse) constitute approximately only 1% of opioid volume.

94. Further, the CDC Guideline confirms the falsity of Purdue’s claims about the utility of patient screening and management strategies in managing addiction risk. The Guideline notes that there are no studies assessing the effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies—such as screening tools or patient contracts—“for improving outcomes related to overdose, addiction, abuse, or misuse.” The CDC Guideline recognizes that available risk screening tools “show *insufficient accuracy* for classification of patients as at low or high risk for [opioid] abuse or misuse” and counsels that doctors “should not overestimate the ability of these tools to rule out risks from long-term opioid therapy.”<sup>38</sup>

95. When one Wakefield urologist asked his sales representatives for information about screening tools in 2009, he was given a copy of *Providing Relief, Preventing Abuse*, which contained inaccurate information about pseudoaddiction, as discussed above. In numerous other sales visits in Rhode Island, Purdue sales representatives encouraged the use of patient contracts. Purdue’s call notes in Rhode Island illustrate the difficulty of reliably identifying at-risk patients. A 2009 call note reflecting a visit with a Providence physician assistant noted that a patient, an

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<sup>38</sup> CDC Guideline at 28 (emphasis added).

ex-military service-member, who had been taking OxyContin without any signs of abuse, was discovered by a local pharmacy to be receiving multiple prescriptions. An internist in Lincoln reported an older patient who had overdosed from crushing OxyContin mixed with a benzodiazepine had been treated for years without incident. The prescribers had not identified that either of these patients was struggling with addiction or abuse.

96. The history of OxyContin's seventeen different labels shows a gradual and seemingly grudging acknowledgement of risks that should have been disclosed sooner. It was only in 2014, and only then in response to a citizen petition Purdue and its front group proxies opposed, that language appeared in the box label to warn that OxyContin, Hysingla ER, MS Contin, and other extended release opioids "exposes patients and other users to the risks of opioid addiction, abuse and misuse, which can lead to overdose or death" and also removed language that "risk for opioid abuse is increased in patients with a personal or family history of substance abuse," in order to avoid giving prescribers a false sense of security. Prior to that, Purdue's labels only warned about the risk of criminal abuse and diversion, consistent with and furthering the false narrative that opioid addiction was a problem of illicit use, and not the overuse, of opioids.

97. Yet Purdue was certainly aware from information solicited through its sales visits and post-marketing surveillance that its opioids were resulting in widespread addiction, abuse, and overdose. Drug companies collect information from several different post-marketing surveillance vendors, including the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), the Research Abuse, Diversion and Addiction Related Surveillance program (RADARS), and National Addictions Vigilance Intervention and Prevention (NAVIPPRO). Purdue, in fact, contracted with NAVIPPRO and

RADARS to conduct studies of the impact of ADF OxyContin on abuse in particular areas and to measure calls to poison control centers for overdoses. Purdue also has hotlines and websites for prescribers, patients, or caregivers to report adverse events, like overdoses and addiction. Purdue regularly checks the FDA’s MEDWATCH database as part of its ongoing post-marketing surveillance requirements and obligations to update their labels, discussed above. Purdue’s website represents as follows:

Purdue Pharma routinely collects and analyzes safety information on our products, including reports from healthcare professionals and patients about adverse events and product complaints. We submit safety reports as appropriate to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which reviews these reports and, when necessary, takes steps to alert healthcare professionals of emerging safety concerns.<sup>39</sup>

98. Thus, Purdue at all times knew that its and other opioids were resulting in medically-caused addiction much sooner than other stakeholders, yet did not take necessary steps to ameliorate it.

**B. PURDUE OVERSTATED THE BENEFITS OF CHRONIC OPIOID THERAPY WHILE FAILING TO DISCLOSE THE LACK OF EVIDENCE SUPPORTING LONG-TERM USE**

*1. Purdue Mischaracterized the Benefits and Evidence for Long-Term Use*

99. To convince prescribers and patients that opioids should be used to treat chronic pain, Purdue had to persuade them of a significant upside to long-term opioid use. Assessing existing evidence, the CDC Guideline found that there is “*insufficient evidence* to determine the long-term benefits of opioid therapy for chronic pain.”<sup>40</sup> In fact, the CDC found that “[n]o evidence shows a long-term benefit of opioids in pain and function versus no opioids for chronic pain with outcomes examined at least 1 year later (with most placebo-controlled randomized

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<sup>39</sup> <http://www.purduepharma.com/healthcare-professionals/ask-purdue-medical/report-adverse-event/>

<sup>40</sup> *Id.* at 10.

trials  $\leq$  6 weeks in duration)”<sup>41</sup> and that other treatments were more or equally beneficial and less harmful than long-term opioid use. The FDA, too, has recognized the lack of evidence to support long-term opioid use. In 2013, the FDA stated that it was “not aware of adequate and well-controlled studies of opioids use longer than 12 weeks.”<sup>42</sup> The FDA also determined that opioid use disorder and overdose risk are present when opioids are taken as prescribed.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the CDC recommends that opioids be used not in the first instance and only after prescribers have exhausted alternative treatments.

100. Purdue touted the purported benefits of long-term opioid use, while falsely and misleadingly suggesting that these benefits were supported by scientific evidence. Going back to OxyContin’s launch, Purdue promoted it as improving patient function through materials like fishing hats and compact discs of big band music called “Get in the Swing with OxyContin.”

101. Two prominent professional medical membership organizations, the American Pain Society (“APS”) and the American Academy of Pain Medicine (“AAPM”), each received substantial funding from Purdue. Upon information and belief, Purdue exercised considerable influence over their work on opioids. Both organizations issued a consensus statement in 1997, *The Use of Opioids for the Treatment of Chronic Pain*, which endorsed opioids to treat chronic pain and claimed that the risk that patients would become addicted to opioids was low. The co-author of the statement, Dr. David Haddox, was at the time a paid speaker for Purdue and later became a senior executive for the company. KOL Dr. Portenoy was the sole consultant. The consensus statement remained on AAPM’s website until 2011. The statement was taken down

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<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from Janet Woodcock, M.D, Dir., Center for Drug Eval. and Research, to Andrew Kolodny, M.D. (Sept. 10, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*



from AAPM’s website only after a doctor complained.

102. AAPM and APS issued treatment guidelines in 2009 (“AAPM/APS Guidelines”) which continued to recommend the use of opioids to treat chronic pain. Treatment guidelines, like the AAPM/APS Guidelines, were particularly important to Purdue in securing acceptance for chronic opioid therapy. They are relied upon by doctors, especially general practitioners and family doctors who have no specific training in treating chronic pain. Six of the twenty-one panel members who drafted the AAPM/APS Guidelines received support from Purdue, and a majority received support from at least one other opioid manufacturer.

103. The AAPM/APS Guidelines promote opioids as “safe and effective” for treating chronic pain. The panel made “strong recommendations” despite “low quality of evidence” and concluded that the risk of addiction is manageable for patients, even with a prior history of drug abuse. One panel member, Dr. Joel Saper, Clinical Professor of Neurology at Michigan State University and founder of the Michigan Headache & Neurological Institute, resigned from the panel because of his concerns that the Guidelines were influenced by contributions that drug companies, including Purdue, made to the sponsoring organizations and committee members.

104. Dr. Gilbert Fanciullo, a retired professor at Dartmouth College’s Geisel School of Medicine who served on the AAPM/APS Guidelines panel, has since described them as “skewed” by drug companies and “biased in many important respects,” including its high presumptive maximum dose, lack of suggested mandatory urine toxicology testing, and claims of a low risk of addiction.

105. The AAPM/APS Guidelines are still available online, were reprinted in the *Journal of Pain*, and have influenced not only treating physicians, but also the body of scientific evidence on opioids. According to Google Scholar, they have now been cited at least 1,647

times in academic literature.

106. Purdue also published misleading studies to enhance the perception that opioids are effective long-term for chronic pain conditions. One study asserts that OxyContin is safe and effective for the chronic pain condition osteoarthritis. The study, sponsored by Purdue, involved providing oxycodone for 30 days, and then randomizing participants and providing a placebo, IR oxycodone with acetaminophen (like Percocet), or OxyContin. Only 107 of the 167 patients went on to the second phase of the study, and most who withdrew left because of adverse events (nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, dizziness, or headache) or ineffective treatment. Despite relating to a chronic condition, opioids were provided only short-term. The authors even acknowledge that the “results ... should be confirmed in trials of longer duration to confirm the role of opioids in a chronic condition such as OA [osteoarthritis].”<sup>44</sup> Yet, the authors conclude that “[t]his clinical experience shows that opioids were well tolerated with only rare incidence of addiction and that tolerance to the analgesic effects was not a clinically significant problem when managing patients with opioids long-term.”<sup>45</sup> This statement is not supported by the data—a substantial number of patients dropped out because of adverse effects, there was no reported data regarding addiction, and the study was not long-term.

107. Call notes reflect that Purdue sales representatives encouraged the use of its opioids for chronic pain patients in Rhode Island sales visits. In at least one instance, Purdue sales representatives noted reviewing patients’ medical charts to help identify appropriate patients for OxyContin. Upon information and belief, Purdue would have identified patients

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<sup>44</sup> Jacques R. Caldwell, *et al.*, Treatment of Osteoarthritis Pain with Controlled Release Oxycodone or Fixed Combination Oxycodone Plus Acetaminophen Added to Nonsteroidal Antiinflammatory Drugs: A Double Blind, Randomized, Multicenter, Placebo Controlled Trial, 266.4 Journal of Rheumatology 862-869 (1999).

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

who were on short-acting or immediate release opioids and did not need around-the-clock opioids, and this practice raises significant privacy considerations. Another prescriber stated that sales representatives never disclosed the lack of evidence for long term use.

*2. Purdue Overstated Opioids' Effect on Patients' Function and Quality of Life*

108. Purdue also claimed—without evidence—that long-term opioid use would help patients resume their lives and jobs. Purdue-sponsored materials that, upon information and belief, were distributed or made available in Rhode Island, reinforced this message. The 2011 publication *A Policymaker's Guide* falsely claimed that “multiple clinical studies have shown that opioids are effective in improving daily function and quality of life for chronic pain patients.” A series of medical journal advertisements for OxyContin in 2012 presented “Pain Vignettes”—case studies featuring patients with pain conditions persisting over several months—that implied functional improvement. For example, one advertisement described a “writer with osteoarthritis of the hands” and implied that OxyContin would help him work more effectively.

109. *Responsible Opioid Prescribing* (2007), sponsored and distributed in part by Purdue, taught that relief of pain by opioids, by itself, improved patients' function. The book remains for sale online.

110. Purdue sponsored APF's *Treatment Options: A Guide for People Living with Pain* (2007), which counseled patients that opioids “give [pain patients] a quality of life we deserve.” The guide was available online until APF shut its doors in May 2012.

111. Likewise, Purdue's claims that long-term use of opioids improves patient function and quality of life are unsupported by clinical evidence. As noted above, there are no controlled studies of the use of opioids beyond 16 weeks, and there is no evidence that opioids improve patients' pain and function long-term. On the contrary, the available evidence indicates opioids

are not effective to treat chronic pain, and may worsen patients' health and pain. Increasing the duration of opioid use is strongly associated with an increasing prevalence of mental health conditions (depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse), increased psychological distress, and greater health care utilization.

112. One pain specialist observed, "opioids may work acceptably well for a while, but over the long term, function generally declines, as does general health, mental health, and social functioning. Over time, even high doses of potent opioids often fail to control pain, and these patients are unable to function normally."<sup>46</sup> Studies of patients with lower back pain and migraine headaches, for example, have consistently shown that patients experienced deteriorating function over time, as measured by ability to return to work, physical activity, pain relief, rates of depression, and subjective quality-of-life measures. Analyses of workers' compensation claims have found that workers who take opioids are almost four times more likely to reach costs over \$100,000, stemming from greater side effects and slower returns to work. According to these studies, receiving an opioid for more than seven days also increased patients' risk of being on work disability one year later.

113. The CDC Guideline notes that "there is no good evidence that opioids improve pain or function with long-term use."<sup>47</sup> The FDA and other federal agencies have made this clear for years.<sup>48</sup> The CDC also noted that the risks of addiction and death "can cause distress

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<sup>46</sup> Andrea Rubinstein, *Are We Making Pain Patients Worse?*, Sonoma Med. (Fall 2009), <http://www.nbcms.org/about-us/sonoma-county-medical-association/magazine/sonoma-medicine-are-we-making-pain-patients-worse?>

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 20.

<sup>48</sup> The FDA has warned other drug makers that claims of improved function and quality of life were misleading. *See*, Warning Letter from Thomas Abrams, Dir., FDA Div. of Mktg., Adver., & Comm'ns, to Doug Boothe, CEO, Actavis Elizabeth LLC (Feb. 18, 2010), (rejecting claims that Actavis' opioid, Kadian, had an "overall positive impact on a patient's work, physical and mental functioning, daily activities, or enjoyment of life."); Warning Letter from Thomas

and inability to fulfill major role obligations.”<sup>49</sup> The CDC Guideline concluded that “[w]hile benefits for pain relief, function and quality of life with long-term opioid use for chronic pain are uncertain, risks associated with long-term opioid use are clearer and significant.”<sup>50</sup> According to the CDC, “for the vast majority of patients, the known, serious, and too-often-fatal risks far outweigh the unproven and transient benefits [of opioids for chronic pain].”<sup>51</sup>

114. In materials Purdue produced, sponsored, or controlled, Purdue omitted known risks of chronic opioid therapy and emphasized or exaggerated risks of competing products so that prescribers and patients would be more likely to choose opioids and would favor opioids over other therapies such as over-the-counter acetaminophen or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (or NSAIDs, like ibuprofen). None of these claims were corroborated by scientific evidence.

115. In Rhode Island, however, sales representatives continued to promote opioids as safe and effective. One Rhode Island doctor described improved function as “often the message” and “quality of life” was often used.

### *3. Purdue Omitted and Mischaracterized Adverse Effects of Opioids*

116. In addition to failing to disclose in promotional materials the risks of addiction, abuse, overdose, and respiratory depression. Purdue routinely ignored the risks of hyperalgesia, a “known serious risk associated with chronic opioid analgesic therapy,”<sup>52</sup> in which the patient

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Abrams, Dir., FDA Div. of Mktg., Adver., & Commc’ns, to Brian A. Markison, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, King Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (March 24, 2008), (finding the claim that “patients who are treated with [Avinza (morphine sulfate ER)] experience an improvement in their overall function, social function, and ability to perform daily activities . . . has not been demonstrated by substantial evidence or substantial clinical experience.”). The FDA’s warning letters were available to Defendants on the FDA website.

<sup>49</sup> CDC Guideline at 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Id* at 18.

<sup>51</sup> *See* n. 6, *supra*.

<sup>52</sup> *Id*.

becomes more sensitive to pain over time, hormonal dysfunction; decline in immune function; mental clouding, confusion, and dizziness; increased falls and fractures in the elderly; neonatal abstinence syndrome (when an infant exposed to opioids prenatally withdraws from the drugs after birth); and potentially fatal interactions with alcohol or benzodiazepines, which are used to treat post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety (often among veterans, for example, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety also can accompany chronic pain symptoms). Despite these risks, in 2014, a sales representative urged a Pawtucket internist to remember that OxyContin was well tolerated in patients over 65, despite to the special risks of opioids to elderly patients. Purdue also learned from its sales visits that Rhode Island prescribers were prescribing OxyContin to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans without discussions of the higher risks of co-morbid conditions or drug interactions faced by veterans, many of whom were taking concurrent anti-anxiety medications, for instance, that substantially increase the risk of overdose when taken with opioids.

117. Purdue sponsored APF's *Treatment Options: A Guide for People Living with Pain* (2007), which counseled patients that opioids differ from NSAIDs in that they have "no ceiling dose" and are therefore the most appropriate treatment for severe pain. The publication inaccurately attributes 10,000 to 20,000 deaths annually to NSAIDs (the actual figure is approximately 3,200, far fewer than from opioids).<sup>53</sup> This publication also warned that risks of NSAIDs increase if "taken for more than a period of months," with no corresponding warning about opioids.

118. Purdue also sponsored APF's *Exit Wounds* (2009), a book aimed at veterans. This book omits warnings of the potentially fatal risk of interactions between opioids and

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<sup>53</sup> The higher figure reflects deaths from all causes.

benzodiazepines, a class of drug commonly prescribed to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. This book is available from Amazon.com and other retailers.

119. Purdue sponsored a CME program, *Overview of Management Options*, published by the American Medical Association in 2003, 2007, 2010, and 2013, and discussed further below. The CME was edited by Dr. Russell Portenoy, among others, and taught that NSAIDs and other drugs, but not opioids, are unsafe at high doses.

120. These omissions are significant and material to patients and prescribers. A Cochrane Collaboration review of evidence relating to the use of opioids for chronic pain found that 22% of patients in opioid trials dropped out before the study began because of the “intolerable effects” of opioids.<sup>54</sup>

121. Again, Purdue’s misrepresentations were effective. A study of 7.8 million doctor visits nationwide between 2000 and 2010 found that opioid prescriptions increased from 11.3% to 19.6% of visits while NSAID and acetaminophen prescriptions fell from 38% to 29%. The CDC reports that the quantity of opioids dispensed per capita tripled from 1999 to 2015.

*4. Purdue Told Doctors That Opioids Could be Taken in Ever Higher Doses Without Disclosing Their Greater Risks*

122. Purdue falsely claimed to prescribers and consumers that opioids could be taken in ever-increasing strengths to obtain pain relief, without disclosing that higher doses increased the risk of addiction and overdose. This was particularly important because patients on opioids for more than a brief period develop tolerance, requiring increasingly high doses to achieve pain relief. These Defendants needed to generate a comfort level among doctors to prescribe higher doses, rather than prescribe OxyContin more frequently than twice a day, despite knowing that

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<sup>54</sup> Meredith Noble M, *et al.*, *Long- Term Opioid Management for Chronic Noncancer Pain (Review)*, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Issue 1, 11 (2010.).

OxyContin frequently did not provide 12 hours of relief to ensure the doctors maintained patients on the drugs even at the high doses that became necessary.

123. Purdue-sponsored publications and CMEs available, upon information and belief, in Rhode Island also misleadingly suggested that higher opioid doses carried no added risk.

124. Through at least June 2015, Purdue’s *In the Face of Pain* website promoted that if a patient’s doctor did not prescribe a sufficient dose of opioids, the patient should see different doctors until finding a doctor who would. Though at least June 2015, Purdue’s *In the Face of Pain* website promoted the notion that if a patient’s doctor did not prescribe a sufficient dose of opioids, the patient should see different doctors until finding a doctor who would.

125. A Policymaker’s Guide, the 2011 publication on which, upon information and belief Purdue collaborated with APF, taught that dose escalations are “sometimes necessary” but did not disclose the risks from high dose opioids, nor the significant hardships that often accompany cessation of high-dose opioids. This publication is still available online.<sup>55</sup>

126. The Purdue-sponsored CME, *Overview of Management Options*, discussed above, again instructed physicians that NSAIDs (like ibuprofen) are unsafe at high doses (because of risks to patients’ kidneys), but did not disclose risks from opioids at high doses. These claims conflict with the scientific evidence. Patients receiving high doses of opioids (e.g., doses greater than 100 mg morphine equivalent dose (“MED”) per day) as part of long-term opioid therapy are three to nine times more likely to suffer overdose from opioid-related causes than those on low doses.<sup>56</sup> As compared to available alternative pain remedies, scholars have suggested that

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<sup>55</sup> See n. 35, *supra*.

<sup>56</sup> Kate M. Dunn, *et al.*, *Opioid Prescriptions for Chronic Pain and Overdose: A Cohort Study*, 152(2) *Annals of Internal Med.* 85-92 (Jan. 19, 2010). Most overdoses were medically serious and 12% were fatal.



tolerance to the respiratory depressive effects of opioids develops at a slower rate than tolerance to opioids’ analgesic effects. Accordingly, the practice of continuously escalating doses to match pain tolerance can, in fact, lead to overdose even where opioids are taken as recommended. The CDC Guideline concludes that the “[b]enefits of high-dose opioids for chronic pain are not established” while “there is an increased risk for serious harms related to long-term opioid therapy that appears to be dose-dependent.”<sup>57</sup> That is why the CDC advises doctors to “avoid increasing doses” above 90 mg MED.<sup>58</sup>

127. Purdue was well aware that prescribers in Rhode Island dispensed high dose opioids from reports in call notes. At one 2007 luncheon, a prescriber reported having “success” prescribing a patient with 960 mg of OxyContin per day—the equivalent of 1,440 mg MED—a sum that necessitates 12 of the highest dose pills per day (and far more than the presumptive limit of 90 mg MED recommended by the CDC). It also takes longer to wean patients off high dose opioids, increasing the risk that patients will be “stuck” on the drugs, but increasing the revenue to manufacturers like Purdue. In fact, one of highest prescribers of opioids in Rhode Island continues prescribing to patients in an effort to gradually lower doses from high peaks.

128. The average OxyContin prescription paid for by Rhode Island’s Medical Assistance Program exceeded 90 mg of MED.

**C. PURDUE MISLEADINGLY PROMOTED OXYCONTIN AS SUPPLYING 12 HOURS OF PAIN RELIEF WHEN PURDUE KNEW THAT, FOR MANY PATIENTS, IT DID NOT**

129. To convince prescribers and patients to use OxyContin, Purdue misleadingly

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<sup>57</sup> CDC Guideline at 19. The 2016 CDC Guideline reinforces earlier findings announced by the FDA. In 2013, the FDA acknowledged “that the available data do suggest a relationship between increasing opioid dose and risk of certain adverse events.” For example, the FDA noted that studies “appear to credibly suggest a positive association between high-dose opioid use and the risk of overdose and/or overdose mortality.”

<sup>58</sup> CDC Guideline at 16.

promoted the drug as providing 12 continuous hours of pain relief with each dose. In reality, OxyContin does not last for 12 hours in many patients, a fact Purdue has known since the product's launch.

130. These misrepresentations, which Purdue continues to make, are particularly dangerous because inadequate dosing helps fuel addiction, as explained below. Purdue conveyed to prescribers that the solution to end of dose failure is not more frequent dosing but higher doses—which pose greater risks.

131. OxyContin has been FDA-approved for twice-daily—"Q12"—dosing frequency since its debut in 1996. Yet it was Purdue's decision to submit OxyContin for approval with 12-hour rather than 8-hour dosing.

132. Under FDA guidelines for establishing dosing, Purdue merely had to show that OxyContin lasted for 12 hours for at least half of patients, and Purdue submitted a single study that cleared that bar. While the OxyContin label indicates that "[t]here are no well-controlled clinical studies evaluating the safety and efficacy with dosing more frequently than every 12 hours," Purdue has conducted no such studies.

133. From the outset, Purdue leveraged 12-hour dosing to promote OxyContin as providing continuous, round-the-clock pain relief with the convenience of not having to wake to take a third or fourth pill. The 1996 press release for OxyContin touted 12-hour dosing as providing "smooth and sustained pain control all day and all night." But the FDA has never approved such a marketing claim. To the contrary, the FDA found in 2008, in response to a Citizen Petition by the Connecticut Attorney General, that a "substantial number" of chronic pain patients taking OxyContin experienced "end of dose failure"—*i.e.*, little or no pain relief at the end of the dosing period.

134. Moreover, Purdue itself long has known, dating to its development of OxyContin, that the drug wears off well short of 12 hours in many patients. In one early Purdue clinical trial, a third of patients dropped out because the treatment was ineffective. Researchers changed the rules to allow patients to take supplemental painkillers—“rescue medication”—in between OxyContin doses. In another study, most patients used rescue medication, and 95% resorted to it at least once. In other research conducted by Purdue, the drug wore off in under 6 hours in 25% of patients and in under 10 hours in more than 50%.

135. End-of-dose failure renders OxyContin even more dangerous because patients begin to experience distressing psychological and physical withdrawal symptoms, followed by a euphoric rush with their next dose—a cycle that fuels a craving for OxyContin. For this reason, Dr. Theodore Cicero, a neuropharmacologist at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, has called OxyContin’s 12-hour dosing “the perfect recipe for addiction.”<sup>59</sup> Many patients will exacerbate this cycle by taking their next dose ahead of schedule or resorting to a rescue dose of another opioid, increasing the overall amount of opioids they are taking.

136. Purdue has remained committed to 12-hour dosing because it is key to OxyContin’s market dominance and comparatively high price; without this advantage, the drug had little to offer over less expensive, short-acting opioids. In a 2004 letter to the FDA, Purdue acknowledged that it had not pursued approval to allow more frequent dosing in the label (*e.g.*, every 8 hours) because 12-hour dosing was “a significant competitive advantage.” Purdue also falsely promoted OxyContin as providing “steady state” relief, less likely than other opioids to create a cycle of crash and cravings that fueled addiction and abuse—a misrepresentation made

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<sup>59</sup> Harriet Ryan, “‘*You Want a Description of Hell?*’ OxyContin’s 12-Hour Problem,” Los Angeles Times, May 5, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/projects/oxycontin-part1/>.

repeatedly in Rhode Island by sales representatives in their visits with prescribers. Purdue sales representatives also promoted OxyContin to doctors as better alternative to shorter acting opioids, regardless of whether or not the short acting drugs were adequately treating pain or that an around-the-clock treatment was necessary. This is problematic because of heightened risks of overdose associated with extended release opioids that prompted the FDA to clarify their indication in 2013 to be appropriate not just for pain lasting for an extended period of time, but pain requiring continuous analgesia. One prescriber told by Purdue that Purdue's extended release opioid was preferable to short-acting drugs in July 2007 then wrote 88 prescriptions for OxyContin covered by Rhode Island Medical Assistance Program, incurring \$66,402.32 in charges.

137. Without appropriate caveats, promotion of 12-hour dosing by itself is misleading because it implies that the pain relief supplied by each dose lasts 12 hours, which Purdue knew to be untrue for many, if not most, patients. FDA approval of OxyContin for 12-hour dosing does not give Purdue license to misrepresent the duration of pain relief it provides to patients; moreover, Purdue had a responsibility to correct its label to reflect appropriate dosing, to disclose to prescribers what it knew about OxyContin's actual duration, and not to promote more dangerous higher dosing, rather than increased frequency of use, regardless of any marketing advantage.<sup>60</sup>

138. Purdue was also aware of some physicians' practice of prescribing OxyContin more frequently than 12 hours—a common occurrence. Purdue's promoted solution to this problem was to increase the dose, rather than the frequency, of prescriptions, even though higher

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<sup>60</sup> For example, Kadian, an opioid manufactured by Allergan, was designed to be taken once a day, but the label acknowledges and advises dosing of up to every 12 hours for certain patients.

dosing carries its own risks—including increased danger of addiction, overdose, and death. It means that patients will experience higher highs and lower lows, increasing their craving for their next pill. Nationwide, based on an analysis by the *Los Angeles Times*, more than 52% of patients taking OxyContin longer than three months are on doses greater than 60 milligrams per day—which converts to the 90 milligrams of morphine equivalent that the CDC Guideline urges prescribers to “avoid” or “carefully justify.”<sup>61</sup>

139. There are numerous examples of Purdue promoting its opioids for 12 hours in Rhode Island, despite knowing that the drugs often did not last 12 hours. One call note from a Purdue sales representative from a 2010 visit to a Providence physician assistant reported the prescriber told the representative “most of the [patients] that she has on OxyContin need to take it ... every 8 [hours].” The representative reported giving her information, including “titration,” which signifies instructions on how to increase the dose. Purdue sales representatives also told one prescriber in Woonsocket that patients on short-acting opioids were more likely to experience pseudoaddiction, implying Purdue’s longer-acting formulation were safer.

**D. PURDUE OVERSTATED THE EFFICACY OF ABUSE-DETERRENT OPIOID FORMULATIONS**

140. Rather than take the widespread abuse and addiction to opioids as reason to cease their untruthful marketing claims and efforts, Purdue seized them as a market opportunity. These companies oversold their abuse-deterrent formulations (“ADF”) as a solution to opioid abuse and as a reason that doctors could continue to safely prescribe their opioids. Purdue’s false and misleading marketing of the benefits of its ADF opioids preserved and expanded its sales and enabled prescribers to discount evidence of opioid addiction and abuse and attribute it to other, less safe opioids – and thereby prolonged the opioid epidemic in Rhode Island.

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<sup>61</sup> CDC Guideline at 16.

141. Reformulated ADF OxyContin was approved by the FDA in April 2010.

However, the FDA noted that “the tamper-resistant properties will have no effect on abuse by the oral route (the most common mode of abuse).” It was not until 2013 that the FDA, in response to a Citizen Petition filed by Purdue, permitted reference to the abuse-deterrent properties in the label. When Hysingla ER (extended-release hydrocodone) launched in 2014, the product included similar abuse-deterrent properties.

142. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that reformulated OxyContin was introduced shortly before generic versions of OxyContin were to become available, threatening to erode Purdue’s market share and the price it could charge. Through a Citizen Petition, Purdue was able to secure a determination by the FDA in April 2013 that original OxyContin should be removed from the market as unsafe (lacking abuse-deterrent properties), and thus non-ADF generic copies could not be sold. As a result, Purdue extended its branded exclusivity for OxyContin until the patent protection on the abuse-deterrent coating expires.

143. Purdue nonetheless touted its introduction of ADF opioids as evidence of its good corporate citizenship and commitment to address the opioid crisis. Ironically, Purdue sales representatives also regularly overstated and misstated the evidence for and impact of the abuse-deterrent features of these opioids. In particular, Purdue sought to promote ADF opioids as “safer” than other opioids and would reduce opioid abuse overall. One Rhode Island prescriber, for example, reported that he was told OxyContin “couldn’t be tampered with” and that “people couldn’t misuse it.” This claim is inconsistent with data Purdue itself submitted to the FDA that would show that only 2.2% of deaths from OxyContin overdose could be traced to injection or snorting—facts Purdue did not, upon information and belief, disclose to prescribers. These omissions provided a false sense of security to prescribers, who would in turn prescribe more

expensive, branded OxyContin in the belief it was safer than alternatives, and would be more comfortable prescribing opioids generally.

144. Misleading statements and omissions by Purdue about the relative safety of ADF drugs were also inconsistent with the FDA-approved labels for Purdue’s ADF opioids.

Approved labeling acknowledges that that abusers seek opioids because of their high likeability when snorted or injected, that their abuse deterrent properties can be defeated, and that they can be abused orally by simply taking more pills. The labels, more importantly, do *not* indicate that ADF opioids prevent or reduce abuse, misuse, or diversion.

145. Purdue knew or should have known that “reformulated OxyContin is not better at tamper resistance than the original OxyContin”<sup>62</sup> and is still regularly tampered with and abused. A critical care assistant in Woonsocket told a Purdue representative in 2010 that his patients told him instructions on how to abuse reformulated OxyContin were online. Websites and message boards used by drug abusers, such as bluelight.org and reddit, also report a variety of ways to tamper with OxyContin and Hysingla ER, including through grinding, microwaving then freezing, or drinking soda or fruit juice in which a tablet is dissolved. A publicly available Citizen Petition submitted to the FDA in 2016 by a drug manufacturing firm challenged Purdue’s abuse-deterrent labeling based on the firm’s ability to easily prepare so-called abuse deterrent OxyContin to be snorted or injected.

146. Further, *one-third* of the patients in a 2015 study defeated the ADF mechanism and were able to continue inhaling or injecting the drug. To the extent that the abuse of Purdue’s ADF opioids was reduced, those addicts simply shifted to other drugs such as heroin and

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<sup>62</sup> *In re OxyContin*, 1:04-md-01603-SHS, Docket No 613, Oct. 7, 2013 hr’g, Testimony of Dr. Mohan Rao, 1615:7-10.

fentanyl.<sup>63</sup>

147. A 2013 article presented by Purdue employees based on review of data from poison control centers, while concluding that ADF OxyContin can reduce abuse, ignored important negative findings. The study reveals that abuse merely shifted to other drugs and that, when the actual incidence of harmful exposures was calculated, there were *more* harmful exposures to opioids (including heroin) after the reformulation of OxyContin. In short, the article emphasized the advantages and ignored disadvantages of ADF OxyContin.

148. The CDC Guideline confirms that “[n]o studies” support the notion that “abuse-deterrent technologies [are] a risk mitigation strategy for deterring or preventing abuse,” noting that the technologies “do not prevent opioid abuse through oral intake, the most common route of opioid abuse, and can still be abused by non-oral routes.”<sup>64</sup> Tom Frieden, the Director of the CDC, reported that his staff could not find “any evidence showing the updated opioids [ADF opioids] actually reduce rates of addiction, overdoses, or death.”<sup>65</sup>

149. In 2015, claiming a need to further assess its data, Purdue abruptly withdrew a supplemental new drug application related to reformulated OxyContin one day before FDA staff were to release its assessment of the application. The staff review preceded an FDA advisory committee meeting related to new studies by Purdue “evaluating the misuse and/or abuse of

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<sup>63</sup> A National Academy of Sciences report cites evidence that up to 80% of the increase in heroin use following the reformulation could be attributed to the reformulation, and this risk was higher in areas, like Rhode Island, that already had persistently high rates of opioid misuse. National Academy of Sciences, *Pain Management and The Opioid Epidemic, Balancing Societal and Individual Benefits and Risks of Prescription Opioid Use*, Bonnie, Ford, Phillips, *et al.*, Washington D.C. (2017) at 192.

<sup>64</sup> CDC Guideline at 22. (emphasis added).

<sup>65</sup> Matthew Perrone, *Drugmakers Push Profitable, but Unproven, Opioid Solution*, Assoc. Press (Jan. 2, 2017), <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/nation/2017/01/02/painkillers-drugmakers-addictive/96095558>.



reformulated OxyContin” and whether those studies "have demonstrated that the reformulated product has a meaningful impact on abuse."<sup>66</sup> Upon information and belief, Purdue never presented the data to the FDA because the data would not have supported claims that OxyContin’s ADF properties reduced abuse or misuse.

150. Yet despite the qualifying language in Purdue’s label and its own evidence—and lack of evidence—regarding the impact of its ADF opioids in reducing abuse, Dr. J. David Haddox, the Vice President of Health Policy for Purdue, falsely claimed in 2016 that the evidence does not show that Purdue’s ADF opioids are being abused in large numbers.

151. Nevertheless, Purdue’s marketing influenced prescribing. For instance, a Cranston internist told Purdue sales representatives that she prescribes OxyContin because she likes the abuse-deterrent labeling. A Providence County pharmacy technician told a Purdue sales representative that she saw the draw of abuse-deterrent formulations in increased Hysingla ER prescribing. A pharmacist in Cumberland also overcame initial resistance to stocking Hysingla ER once the ADF properties were explained. An East Greenwich prescriber also told Purdue he “liked” the ADF properties. A Pawtucket pharmacist told Purdue the ADF properties gave her “peace of mind.” A Woonsocket neurologist who told Purdue’s sales representative he was not starting new patients on opioids indicated a willingness to consider reformulated OxyContin, agreeing the supposed ADF properties would be “important” to him in new patient starts. The marketing and sales presentations such as these resulted in OxyContin prescriptions being written and covered by Rhode Island’s Medical Assistance Program.

152. Sales representatives told a Pawtucket internist in 2015 that patients she sees who

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<sup>66</sup> Meeting Notice, Joint Meeting of the Drug Safety and Risk Management Advisory Committee and the Anesthetic and Analgesic Drug Products Advisory Committee; Notice of Meeting, May 25, 2015, 80 FR 30686.

are worried about abuse, such as those who call in early refills, might be “perfect” candidates for OxyContin or Hysingla ER. Purdue also told a Pawtucket rheumatologist that ADF OxyContin should help overcome reluctance to prescribe opioids. Purdue sales representatives in numerous cases encouraged the use of ADF opioids in response to state prescribing guidelines issued in March 2015 (updated again in February 2017),<sup>67</sup> in the belief that ADF opioids satisfied the policy of safe and appropriate opioid prescribing.

E. DEFENDANT SACKLER APPROVED PURDUE’S DECEPTIVE MARKETING THROUGHOUT THE RELEVANT TIME PERIOD

153. In his capacity as President of Purdue during the launch of OxyContin, and as a board member after 2003 who was personally active in directing Purdue’s operations, Sackler knew of and approved deceptive marketing tactics. As a member of the boards of relevant Purdue and Rhodes entities, Sackler oversaw the hiring of sales representatives, the number of visits made, and the choice of drugs to promote. On at least one occasion, Sackler acted as a sales representative himself, e-mailing a prominent cardiologist and popular author of self-help books that OxyContin tablets were “easy to use” and that there was no “right dose,” falsely suggesting that the doses could be increased indefinitely without added risk to the patient.

154. Defendant Sackler was also aware of specific examples of deceptive marketing through receipt of call note reviews in his capacity as a board member, in 2010 and 2011, and on information and belief, at all times relevant to this action. As President, Sackler received reports of opioid overdoses and reports of misuse and abuse. He also continued to be involved in the operations of Purdue as he and other members of the board (including his brother, cousin, and nephew) formed a committee to discuss patent licenses in 2013.

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<sup>67</sup> See Rules and Regulations for Pain Management, Controlled Substance Prescribing and the Registration of Distributors of Controlled Substances in Rhode Island, <http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/DOH/8473.pdf>

155. Sackler also personally directed a deceptive strategy to misrepresent the strength of OxyContin. At the time of launch, owing to the use of oxycodone in short-acting combination drugs, it had the reputation as a “weak” drug, even though it is 1.5 times stronger than morphine on a milligram to milligram basis. Sackler personally sought to exploit this perception, which he knew was false in order to position OxyContin as a drug to be used earlier in the treatment of pain than morphine. In deposition testimony, Sackler referred to this as oxycodone’s “personality,” in that it lacked the association in the prescriber’s mind morphine had as a drug reserved for end-of-life and most severe pain. At the same time, Purdue, at Sackler’s direction, set the price for OxyContin based on a formula treating OxyContin as *twice* as strong than morphine. Sackler understood that by starting patients on OxyContin, they would rather keep increasing its dose than switch to morphine—an especially profitable outcome for Purdue.

156. Sackler, as a member of the family that owns Purdue personally benefitted from the success of OxyContin. At various points, he as a director approved the distribution of funds from Purdue to shareholders, including himself and his extended family, including in investment funds managed by Sackler’s grandson David, also a Purdue board member.

157. In addition to knowingly minimizing the risk of addiction, Defendant Sackler allowed Purdue to be willfully blind to evidence of opioid abuse. When asked in a 2015 deposition if it would have been a good idea before putting OxyContin on the market to have an abuse monitoring system and database from which to tell if the drug was being diverted or abused, Defendant Sackler acknowledged, “Absolutely, yes.” Despite knowing that such surveillance was appropriate, given the dangerous nature of OxyContin, Defendant Sackler did not direct Purdue to implement such a system at launch and, upon information and belief, Purdue did not do so for many years thereafter.

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158. In a deposition taken for prior litigation, a Purdue legal secretary named Maureen Sara testified that in late 1999, she sent a memorandum to the Sacklers, including Defendant Sackler, about what she had learned on the internet about “crushing the tablets [of OxyContin], taking the coating off, cooking it up. Shooting or snorting it.”

159. Sackler also received adverse event reports that made clear to him that patients were becoming addicted to, abusing, overdosing on, and dying from OxyContin. Between 2000 and 2002, for example, adverse event reports circulated to Sackler included reports of abuse, addiction, withdrawal, overdoses, and deaths from OxyContin, such as:

3/11/2002	OxyContin Tablets 10mg	A 31-year old male experienced “hardcore” addiction while reportedly taking OxyContin (controlled release oxycodone hydrochloride. The media in the USA reported this case.
4/9/2002	OxyContin Tablets 80mg	A female patient experienced withdrawal symptoms, chills and shakes . . . while on OxyContin.
4/22/2002	OxyContin Tablets	Female patient died suddenly . . . brought about and exacerbated by OxyContin intoxication while taking OxyContin . . . for myofascial pain syndrome and unspecified lower back pain.”
5/13/2002	OxyContin Tablets	Female patient addicted to OxyContin and suffering withdrawal symptoms, drug addiction, physical injury, emotional distress
6/3/2002	OxyContin Tablets 80mg	Via Purdue IPAP [Individual Patient Assistant program]: “40-year-old white female patient experienced drug abuse while taking OxyContin 80 mg q8hours for non-malignant pain... patient was abusing OxyContin and . . . drug seeking behavior
6/28/2002	OxyContin Tablets (plus 4 other preparations)	34-year-old male patient experienced drug addiction and died from a drug overdose while taking OxyContin and other unspecified drugs.
1/09/2003	OxyContin Tablets 10 mg OxyContin Tablets 20 mg OxyContin Tablets 80 mg	Male patient experienced drug addiction and withdrawal while taking OxyContin for “bad back” after going from 20 to 160 mg doses a day as prescribed

160. From at least 1999, Defendant Sackler was personally aware that: (1) OxyContin was being prescribed without proper care; (2) OxyContin was widely abused, including orally, and not just through snorting or injecting; (3) Purdue failed to adequately disclose the risks of

abuse and diversion; and (4) as noted above, OxyContin was wrongly, and dangerously, perceived as safer than morphine.

161. According to Barry Meier’s book *Pain Killer*, in early 2001, Purdue met with the DEA, which was starting to raise alarms over OxyContin overdoses. Defendant Sackler participated in this meeting and defended OxyContin as an extremely good drug. According to the book, the head of the DEA’s Office of Diversion Control leaned across to Defendant Sackler and stated: “People are dying. Do you understand that?” Based on Purdue’s continued marketing conduct, Sackler either did not understand or care, for Purdue did nothing to rein in Purdue’s misleading promotion of OxyContin.

162. Reinforcing the DEA’s message, in February 2001, Defendant Sackler was among a group of Purdue officials who received an Issues Monitoring Report that included reports of OxyContin abuse in different areas of the country.

163. In May 2001, Defendant Richard Sackler was among a small group of Purdue officers briefed on a meeting between senior Purdue and FDA officials on April 23, 2001 regarding OxyContin. FDA’s stated purpose in the meeting was to “provide comments and suggestions on a Risk Management program for OxyContin.” While the FDA reported that it was looking at all opioids, Purdue’s summary of the meeting, which was shared with Defendant Sackler, recounted that the FDA was focused on OxyContin as “**it is the bad actor.**” (emphasis added). Purdue promised that it was “taking this problem very seriously” and shared FDA’s “concern regarding the misuse and abuse of our product . . .” The FDA reported that data showed, since 1995, OxyContin prescribing had shifted from oncology to family practitioners and from cancer to chronic conditions like lumbago, myalgia, and “other back pain related terms” and that OxyContin prescribing “had increased 10 fold.” Purdue confirmed that this data was

consistent with other data it had.

164. Dr. Sharon Hertz of the FDA’s Division of Anesthetic, Critical Care & Addiction Drug Products requested that OxyContin’s package insert be revised with “knowledge gained from the experience with the product on the market added to the abuse and adverse event section of the insert” and “improvements throughout the drug abuse section.” Dr. Cynthia McCormick, the Division Director noted that it is the perception of OxyContin is that “it is good for whatever ails you” and that needs to be changed. Dr. Hertz added that “doctors did not have the right perception about the use of OxyContin. The implication was that the prescribing behavior is too casual, ‘this is not a big deal.’” Purdue had, and continued to cultivate this perception for roughly two decades.

165. Purdue acknowledged that it was aware of abuse of OxyContin orally (without tampering), as well as by snorting or injecting. It was not, the FDA explained, a matter of changing a few words in OxyContin’s label; Dr. McCormick declared that “‘**major overhaul is my message**’. The prescribing of OxyContin is creeping into a whole population of people where it doesn’t belong. Just rewriting the abuse and dependence section won’t help much, that part of the insert is not a pivot point” (emphasis added). Another FDA participant asked that Purdue “refocus our promotional materials and make the risks of abuse and diversion more prominent.”

166. In 2001, Purdue revised the indication and warnings for OxyContin and withdrew the 160 mg strength of OxyContin, but, as would have been obvious to Defendant Sackler, did not go nearly as far as the FDA recommended or the known risks of the product demanded.

## **V. INSYS EMPLOYED FRADULENT, ILLEGAL, AND MISLEADING MARKETING SCHEMES TO PROMOTE SUBSYS**

167. Insys’ opioid, Subsys, was approved by the FDA in 2012 for “management of

breakthrough pain in adult cancer patients who are already receiving and who are tolerant to around-the-clock opioid therapy for their underlying persistent cancer pain.” Under FDA rules, Insys could only market Subsys for this use. Subsys consists of the highly addictive narcotic, fentanyl, administered via a sublingual (under the tongue) spray, which provides rapid-onset pain relief. It is in the class of drugs described as Transmucosal Immediate-Release Fentanyl (“TIRF”).

168. To reduce the risk of abuse, misuse, and diversion, the FDA instituted a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (“REMS”) for Subsys and other TIRF products, such as Teva’s Actiq and Fentora. The purpose of REMS was to educate “prescribers, pharmacists, and patients on the potential for misuse, abuse, addiction, and overdose” and to “ensure safe use and access to these drugs for patients who need them.”<sup>68</sup> Prescribers must enroll in TIRF REMS before writing a prescription for Subsys.

169. As part of the TIRF REMS program, all prescribers interested in prescribing Subsys were required to acknowledge they “understand that TIRF medicines are indicated only for the management of breakthrough pain in patients with cancer, who are already receiving, and who are tolerant to, around-the-clock opioid therapy for their underlying persistent pain.”<sup>69</sup> Further, the form required the prescriber to indicate that he or she “understand[s] that TIRM medications are contraindicated for use in opioid non-tolerant patients” and that “TIRM medicines must not be used to treat any contraindicated conditions ... such as acute or postoperative pain, including headache/migraine.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Press Release, FDA, FDA Approves Shared System REMS for TIRF Products, December 29, 2011.

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.tirfremssaccess.com/TirfUI/remss/pdf/prescriber-enrollment-form.pdf>

<sup>70</sup> *Id.*

170. Since its launch, Subsys has been an extremely expensive medication, and Insys has increased its prices every year. Depending on a patient's dosage and frequency of use, a month's supply of Subsys could cost in the thousands of dollars.

171. Due to its high cost, in most instances prescribers must submit Subsys prescriptions to insurance companies or health benefit payors for prior authorization to determine whether they will pay for the drug prior to the patient attempting to fill the prescription. According to the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Minority Staff Report ("Staff Report"), the prior authorization process includes "confirmation that the patient had an active cancer diagnosis, was being treated by an opioid (and, thus, was opioid tolerant), and was being prescribed Subsys to treat breakthrough pain that the other opioid could not eliminate. If any one of these factors was not present, the prior authorization would be denied ... meaning no reimbursement would be due."<sup>71</sup>

172. These prior authorization requirements proved to be daunting. Subsys received reimbursement approval in only approximately 30% of submitted claims.<sup>72</sup> In order to increase approvals, Insys created a prior authorization unit, called the Insys Reimbursement Center (IRC) to obtain approval for Subsys reimbursements.<sup>73</sup> This unit employed a number of fraudulent and misleading tactics to secure reimbursements, including falsifying medical histories of patients, falsely claiming that patients had cancer, and providing misleading information to insurers and

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<sup>71</sup> Staff Report, Fueling an Epidemic, Insys Therapeutics and the Systemic Manipulation of Prior Authorization.

<sup>72</sup> German Lopez, Want to Understand How Big Pharma Helped Create the Opioid Epidemic? Read This Report, Vox, September 6, 2017.

<sup>73</sup> Staff Report, Fueling an Epidemic, Insys Therapeutics and the Systemic Manipulation of Prior Authorization.



payors regarding patients' diagnoses and medical conditions.<sup>74</sup> This practice occurred on a nationwide and corporate level, and upon information and belief, based on criminal indictments brought against prescribers and executives, at least one Rhode Island prescriber falsified patient records and did so with Insys's knowledge in order to obtain insurance coverage for Subsys.

173. Subsys has proved to be very profitable for Insys. Insys made approximately \$330 million in net revenue from Subsys last year. Between 2013 and 2016, the value of Insys stock rose 296%.<sup>75</sup>

174. Since its launch in 2012, Insys has aggressively worked to grow its profits through fraudulent, illegal, and misleading tactics. Through its sales representatives and other marketing efforts, Insys deceptively promoted Subsys as safe and appropriate for uses such as neck and back pain, without disclosing the lack of approval or evidence for such uses, and misrepresented the appropriateness of Subsys for treating those conditions. It implemented a kickback scheme wherein it paid prescribers for fake speaker programs in exchange for prescribing Subsys. And it defrauded insurance providers and health benefit payors into paying for improper prescriptions of Subsys. These fraudulent and misleading schemes had the effect of pushing Insys' highly potent and dangerous opioid onto patients who did not need it, further exacerbating the opioid epidemic.<sup>76</sup>

175. In addition, Insys incentivized its sales force to engage in illegal and fraudulent conduct. Many of the Insys sales representatives were new to the pharmaceutical industry and

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<sup>74</sup> German Lopez, Want to Understand How Big Pharma Helped Create the Opioid Epidemic? Read This Report, Vox, September 6, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> *Id.*

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

their base salaries were low compared to industry standard.<sup>77</sup> The compensation structure was heavily weighted towards commissions, and rewarded reps more for selling higher (and more expensive) doses of Subsys, a “highly unusual” practice because most companies consider dosing a patient-specific decision that should be made by a doctor.<sup>78</sup>

176. The Insys “speakers program” was perhaps its most widespread and damaging scheme. In Rhode Island, the program relied on one prescriber, Jerrold Rosenberg, in particular. Rosenberg received nearly \$200,000 from Insys, representing 94% of Insys’s promotional spending in the state. Rosenberg was paid \$178,740 for 85 talks, although only 59 events reported any attendees—thus indicating that these were not paid-for promotional events, but rewards to Rosenberg for his own prescribing. Rosenberg received between \$1,600 and \$4,800 for each “talk.” Another event in 2013 in Rhode Island was given by a nurse practitioner in Connecticut described as the state’s highest Medicare prescriber of narcotics, who in 2015 plead guilty to receiving \$83,000 in kickbacks from Insys for prescribing Subsys. Most of her patients were prescribed the drug for chronic pain. In her guilty plea, the nurse admitted that she was receiving the speaker fees in exchange for writing prescriptions for Subsys.<sup>79</sup>

177. Senior executives, including Kapoor, closely tracked the impact the kickbacks had on the prescribing habits of the physicians who took them, including on information and belief, and based on the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Massachusetts’ indictment of Kapoor, Rosenberg.

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<sup>77</sup> Katie Thomas, Doubts Raised About Off-Label Use of Subsys, a Strong Painkiller, New York Times, May 13, 2014.

<sup>78</sup> Id.

<sup>79</sup> Lisa Chedekel, High-Prescribing Nurse Charged with Accepting Drug Company Kickbacks, Connecticut Health I-Team, June 23, 2015. Katie Thomas, Nurse Pleads Guilty to Taking Kickbacks From Drug Maker, New York Times, June 25, 2015.

178. Insys also hired Rosenberg's son as a sales representative, upon information and belief, in an effort to reward and encourage his prescribing, although at one point in 2013 he was replaced in the Rhode Island territory by Natalie Levine, another detailer who covered much of the New England area and has since plead guilty to conspiring to provide kickbacks to prescribers. According to Levine's indictment, on at least one occasion, Insys paid Rosenberg for a talk at which no other prescribers were present and Rosenberg forged the signature of a prescriber he knew but did not attend to make the event appear legitimate. Records provided to Rhode Island by Insys show that Rosenberg received \$3,200 six days later. The individual whose name Rosenberg forged on the sign-in sheets also appears on a list of attendees at seven separate events, including separate events on September 4, 11, and 12 of 2013, in addition to the event on October 3, which was the first attended by Levine.

179. Even after Rosenberg entered into a consent order with the Rhode Island Department of Health on September 8, 2014, recognizing that Rosenberg had prescribed Subsys off-label and reprimanding him for poor record keeping,<sup>80</sup> Insys continued to pay him for sham speaker programs. Rosenberg received two payments of \$2,200 the very next day, and a total of \$66,850 for 28 programs until his speaker programs finally ended in July 2015.

180. Insys' kickback scheme and misleading marketing of Subsys as appropriate for non-cancer pain contributed to the opioid epidemic in Rhode Island. One of Rosenberg's patients, dosed with more than 400 mg MED Subsys per day (more than 4 times the CDC recommended maximum daily dosage of all opioids), experienced significant side effects including weight loss and lethargy and wanted to quit the drug, but her doses were so high other prescribers were not willing to take her on as a patient, and so she continued to see him for pain

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<sup>80</sup> <http://health.ri.gov/discipline/MDJerroldRosenberg.pdf>

treatment, and he continued prescribing Subsys to her. In one case, Rosenberg switched a patient from an opioid that the patient found more effective than Subsys and would not switch it back even when she told him she did not respond well to Subsys. Another Rosenberg patient on 576 mg MED of Subsys nearly died in Rosenberg's office during a visit; another patient on 432 mg MED of Subsys reported overdosing two different times.

181. Upon information and belief, these drugs continued to be approved by private insurers because of false statements made to them by the Insys Reimbursement Center, including misrepresentations regarding their pain conditions. Only one patient of those who testified at his sentencing had cancer, but his treatment was for pain from post-surgery scar tissue rather than breakthrough tumor pain. Others experienced headaches, back pain, or other chronic non-cancer conditions. Rosenberg even told one patient Subsys was specifically for chronic pain. Rosenberg was informed by a benefits manager that one of his patients was suspected of drug seeking behavior, yet nevertheless prescribed her high doses of Subsys. When an insurance company realized the patients did not have cancer and the drug was not appropriate, Rosenberg cut them off, subjecting them to painful and difficult withdrawal.

## **VI. TEVA ILLEGALLY MISREPRESENTED THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF ITS OPIOIDS**

### **A. TEVA MISCHARACTERIZED THE RISKS OF OPIOIDS AS A CLASS**

182. Teva has manufactured two main branded opioid products, Actiq and Fentora, as well as a number of generic opioids, and sold generic versions of OxyContin between 2005 and 2009. Actiq and Fentora are, like Subsys, TIRF opioids, which means they are extremely potent and more limited in indication than other opioids. Actiq was first approved in 1998, and indicated for the management of breakthrough cancer pain in patients with malignancies who are already receiving and who are tolerant to opioid therapy for their underlying persistent cancer

pain. References to cancer thus appeared three times in one sentence of the indication. Cephalon acquired the rights to Actiq in 2000, and by 2002, By 2002, Actiq sales had increased by 92%, which Cephalon attributed to “a dedicated sales force for ACTIQ” and “ongoing changes to [its] marketing approach including hiring additional sales representatives and targeting our marketing efforts to pain specialists.”<sup>81</sup> Actiq became Cephalon’s second best-selling drug. By the end of 2006, Actiq’s sales had exceeded \$500 million. Only 1% of the 187,076 prescriptions for Actiq filled at retail pharmacies during the first six months of 2006 were prescribed by oncologists. One measure suggested that “more than 80 percent of patients who use[d] the drug don’t have cancer.”<sup>82</sup>

183. Evidence of off-label promotion of Actiq (as well as two other non-opioid drugs) led Cephalon to enter into a Corporate Integrity Agreement with the Office of the Inspector General of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and to pay \$425 million in civil and criminal penalties. According to a DOJ press release, Cephalon had trained sales representatives to disregard restrictions of the FDA-approved label, employed sales representatives and healthcare professionals to speak to physicians about off-label uses of the three drugs and funded CME to promote off-label uses. When Teva acquired Cephalon in 2011, it stepped into Cephalon’s shoes for purposes of the Corporate Integrity Agreement.

184. Teva’s predecessor faced another problem with Actiq, however, which was impending generic competition. To stave off loss of marketshare. Cephalon introduced Fentora in 2006, which similar to Actiq, is a TIRF opioid approved only for the treatment of breakthrough pain in patients with cancer who are already receiving and who are tolerant to

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<sup>81</sup> Cephalon, Inc. Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 28 (Mar. 31, 2003), <https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/873364/000104746903011137/a2105971z10-k.htm>.

<sup>82</sup> *Id.*

opioid therapy for their underlying persistent cancer pain. Cephalon, and later Teva, thus began a program to migrate patients who were taking Actiq to Fentora, as well as to start new patients on Fentora.

185. However, On September 27, 2007, the FDA issued a public health advisory to address numerous reports that patients who did not have cancer or were not opioid tolerant had been prescribed Fentora, and death or life-threatening side effects had resulted. The FDA warned: “Fentora should not be used to treat any type of short-term pain.” Indeed, FDA specifically denied the application, in 2008, to broaden the indication of Fentora to include treatment of non-cancer breakthrough pain and use in patients who were not already opioid-tolerant.

186. Flagrantly disregarding the FDA’s refusal to broaden the indication for Fentora, Teva nonetheless marketed Fentora beyond its approved indications. On March 26, 2009, the FDA warned Cephalon against its misleading advertising of Fentora (“Warning Letter”). The Warning Letter described a Fentora Internet advertisement as misleading because it purported to broaden “the indication for Fentora by implying that any patient with cancer who requires treatment for breakthrough pain is a candidate for Fentora . . . when this is not the case.” It further criticized Cephalon’s other direct Fentora advertisements because they did not disclose the risks associated with the drug.

187. Despite this warning, Teva continued to use the same sales tactics to push Fentora as it did with Actiq, including (a) promoting the use of opioids for the treatment of chronic non-cancer pain, Actiq or Fentora can only be prescribed to patients already taking opioids; and (b) to encourage the use of Fentora in non-cancer settings.

188. For example, Teva sponsored and facilitated the development of a guidebook,

Opioid Medications and REMS: A Patient’s Guide, which included claims that “patients without a history of abuse or a family history of abuse do not commonly become addicted to opioids.”

Similarly, Teva sponsored APF’s *Treatment Options: A Guide for People Living with Pain* (2007), which taught that addiction is rare and limited to extreme cases of unauthorized dose escalations, obtaining opioids from multiple sources, or theft.

189. In 2003 a Teva-sponsored CME presentation titled Pharmacologic Management of Breakthrough or Incident Pain, posted on Medscape in February 2003, recites:

[C]hronic pain is often undertreated, particularly in the noncancer patient population. . . . The continued stigmatization of opioids and their prescription, coupled with often unfounded and self-imposed physician fear of dealing with the highly regulated distribution system for opioid analgesics, remains a barrier to effective pain management and must be addressed. Clinicians intimately involved with the treatment of patients with chronic pain recognize that the majority of suffering patients lack interest in substance abuse. In fact, patient fears of developing substance abuse behaviors such as addiction often lead to undertreatment of pain. The concern about patients with chronic pain becoming addicted to opioids during long-term opioid therapy may stem from confusion between physical dependence (tolerance) and psychological dependence (addiction) that manifests as drug abuse.

190. Further, in 2007, Teva, along with Purdue, sponsored APF’s *Treatment Options: A Guide for People Living with Pain* (2007), which also falsely reassured patients that opioid agreements between doctors and patients can “ensure that you take the opioid as prescribed.”<sup>83</sup> This publication also taught patients that opioids have “no ceiling dose” and therefore are safer than NSAIDs. The publication also falsely attributed 10,000 to 20,000 deaths annually to NSAID overdose, when the figure is closer to 3,200. Teva also sponsored the Federation of State Medical Boards’ (“FSMB”) *Responsible Opioid Prescribing* (2007), which taught that

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<sup>83</sup> By 2011, APF was dependent on Purdue, Teva, and others for funding. Despite its ties to and dependence on Defendants, APF held itself out as an independent organization. In 2012, the U.S. Senate Finance Committee began looking into APF’s to ascertain any links between the organization and the manufacturers of prescription opioids. Within days of becoming a target of this investigation, the APF voted to dissolve. APF then closed its doors and declared that the organization had ceased to exist.

behaviors such as “requesting drugs by name,” “demanding or manipulative behavior,” seeing more than one doctor to obtain opioids, and hoarding, which are signs of genuine addiction, are all really signs of “pseudoaddiction.”

**B. TEVA PROMOTED ITS FENTANYL OPIOIDS FOR OFF-LABEL USES**

191. Teva deceptively marketed its opioids Actiq and Fentora for chronic pain even though the FDA has expressly limited their use to the treatment of cancer pain in opioid-tolerant individuals. Both Actiq and Fentora are extremely powerful fentanyl-based IR opioids. Neither is approved for or has been shown to be safe or effective for chronic pain. Indeed, the FDA expressly prohibited Teva from marketing Actiq for anything but cancer pain, and refused to approve Fentora for the treatment of chronic pain because of the potential harm, including the high risk of “serious and life-threatening adverse events” and abuse – which are greatest in non-cancer patients.

192. In 2008, Cephalon pled guilty to a criminal violation of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act for its misleading promotion of Actiq and two other drugs and agreed to pay \$425 million.

193. As with Subsys, to reduce the risk of abuse, misuse, and diversion, the FDA instituted a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (“REMS”), which was approved in 2011 and in effect in 2012. The purpose of REMS was to educate “prescribers, pharmacists, and patients on the potential for misuse, abuse, addiction, and overdose” for this type of drug and to “ensure safe use and access to these drugs for patients who need them.”<sup>84</sup> Prescribers must enroll in the TIRF REMS before writing a prescription for Actiq or Fentora.

194. Despite this, Teva conducted and continues to conduct a well-funded campaign to

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<sup>84</sup> Press Release, FDA, FDA Approves Shared System REMS for TIRF Products, Dec. 29, 2011.



promote Actiq and Fentora for chronic pain and other non-cancer conditions for which it was not approved, appropriate, or safe. As part of this campaign, Teva used CMEs, speaker programs, KOLs, journal supplements, and detailing by its sales representatives to give doctors the false impression that Actiq and Fentora are safe and effective for treating non-cancer pain.

195. On September 27, 2007, the FDA issued a public health advisory to address numerous reports that patients who did not have cancer or were not opioid tolerant had been prescribed Fentora, and death or life-threatening side effects had resulted. The FDA warned: “Fentora should not be used to treat any type of short-term pain.” Indeed, FDA specifically denied Cephalon’s application, in 2008, to broaden the indication of Fentora to include treatment of non-cancer breakthrough pain and use in patients who were not already opioid-tolerant.

196. Flagrantly disregarding the FDA’s refusal to broaden the indication for Fentora, Teva nonetheless marketed Fentora beyond its approved indications. On March 26, 2009, the FDA warned Teva against its misleading advertising of Fentora (“Warning Letter”). The Warning Letter described a Fentora Internet advertisement as misleading because it purported to broaden “the indication for Fentora by implying that any patient with cancer who requires treatment for breakthrough pain is a candidate for Fentora . . . when this is not the case.” It further criticized Cephalon’s other direct Fentora advertisements because they did not disclose the risks associated with the drug.

197. Despite this warning, Cephalon continued to use the same sales tactics to push Fentora. For example, on January 13, 2012, Cephalon published an insert in Pharmacy Times titled “An Integrated Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) for FENTORA (Fentanyl Buccal Tablet) and ACTIQ (Oral Transmucosal Fentanyl Citrate).” Despite the repeated warnings of the dangers associated with the use of the drugs beyond their limited indication, as

detailed above, the first sentence of the insert states: “It is well recognized that the judicious use of opioids can facilitate effective and safe management of chronic pain.”

198. Teva also recognized the return of its efforts to market Actiq and Fentora off-label for chronic pain. In 2000, Actiq generated \$15 million in sales. By 2002, Actiq sales had increased by 92%, which Teva attributed to “a dedicated sales force for ACTIQ” and “ongoing changes to [its] marketing approach including hiring additional sales representatives and targeting our marketing efforts to pain specialists.” Actiq became Cephalon’s second best-selling drug. By the end of 2006, Actiq’s sales had exceeded \$500 million. Only 1% of the 187,076 prescriptions for Actiq filled at retail pharmacies during the first six months of 2006 were prescribed by oncologists. One measure suggested that “more than 80 percent of patients who use[d] the drug don’t have cancer.”

199. Within Rhode Island, of the 13 prescribers for whom Teva provided payments from 2013-2016 relating to Fentora (including 4 visits to Jerrold Rosenberg), none were oncologists.

200. Teva also spread misleading messages through its sponsorship of continuing medical education programs. Although ostensibly neutral, Teva used the same vendors and sponsors multiple times, and certain of the faculty had prior relationships with Teva, including acting as promotional speakers or consultants. These CME also encouraged off-label uses of Teva’s TIRF opioids.

201. In 2007, Teva sponsored the publication of an article titled “Impact of Breakthrough Pain on Quality of Life in Patients with Chronic, Noncancer Pain: Patient Perceptions and Effect of Treatment with Oral Transmucosal Fentanyl Citrate,” published in the nationally circulated journal *Pain Medicine*, to support its effort to expand the use of its branded

fentanyl products. The article’s authors (including Dr. Lynn Webster, discussed below) stated that the “OTFC [fentanyl] has been shown to relieve BTP more rapidly than conventional oral, normal-release, or ‘short acting’ opioids” and that “[t]he purpose of [the] study was to provide a qualitative evaluation of the effect of BTP on the [quality of life] of noncancer pain patients.” The number-one-diagnosed cause of chronic pain in the patients studied was back pain (44%), followed by musculoskeletal pain (12%) and head pain (7%). The article cites Dr. Portenoy and recommends fentanyl for non-cancer BTP patients:

In summary, BTP appears to be a clinically important condition in patients with chronic noncancer pain and is associated with an adverse impact on QoL. This qualitative study on the negative impact of BTP and the potential benefits of BTP-specific therapy suggests several domains that may be helpful in developing BTP-specific, QoL assessment tools.

202. Teva sponsored a CME written by pro-opioid physician Dr. Lynn Webster, who also acted as a consultant to Teva entitled, *Optimizing Opioid Treatment for Breakthrough Pain*, offered by Medscape, LLC from September 28, 2007 through December 15, 2008. The CME taught that non-opioid analgesics and combination opioids containing non-opioids such as aspirin and acetaminophen are less effective at treating breakthrough pain because of dose limitations on the non-opioid component.

203. Another Teva-sponsored CME presentation titled *Breakthrough Pain: Treatment Rationale with Opioids* was available on Medscape starting September 16, 2003 and was given by a self-professed pain management doctor who treated “previously operated back, complex pain syndromes, the neuropathies, and interstitial cystitis.” He describes the pain process as a non-time-dependent continuum that requires a balanced analgesia approach using “targeted pharmacotherapeutics to affect multiple points in the pain-signaling pathway.”<sup>85</sup> The doctor lists

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<sup>85</sup> Daniel S. Bennett, *Breakthrough Pain: Treatment Rationale With Opioids*, Medscape, <http://www.medscape.org/viewarticle/461612> (last visited Oct. 10, 2017).

fentanyl as one of the most effective opioids available for treating breakthrough pain, describing its use as an expected and normal part of the pain management process. Nowhere in the CME is cancer or cancer-related pain even mentioned, despite FDA restrictions that fentanyl use be limited to cancer-related pain.

204. Teva paid to have a CME it sponsored, *Opioid-Based Management of Persistent and Breakthrough Pain*, published in a supplement of Pain Medicine News in 2009. The CME instructed doctors that “clinically, broad classification of pain syndromes as either cancer- or noncancer-related has limited utility” and recommended Actiq and Fentora for patients with chronic pain. The CME is still available online.

205. In December 2011, Teva widely disseminated, including on information and belief, in Rhode Island, a journal supplement entitled “Special Report: An Integrated Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy for Fentanyl Buccal Tablet (FENTORA) and Oral Transmucosal Fentanyl Citrate (ACTIQ)” Anesthesiology News, Clinical Oncology News, and Pain Medicine News – three publications that are sent to thousands of anesthesiologists and other medical professionals. The Special Report openly promotes Fentora for “multiple causes of pain” – and not just cancer pain.

206. The level of specificity included in the Teva-sponsored CME uniquely describe Teva’s products render these CMEs impermissibly promotional, and the fact that speakers such as Webster acted as Teva consultants, and continued to do so after these off-label promotional materials appeared, suggests a concrete purpose to use CME channels to promote its products for off-label uses. By enlisting accrediting agencies in support of their branded promotional efforts, as well, Teva was able to change the medical consensus in favor of a dangerous off-label use of its fentanyl products, one specifically prohibited by the FDA.

**VII. MALLINCKRODT FALSELY TRIVIALIZED, MISCHARACTERIZED, AND FAILED TO DISCLOSE THE KNOWN RISKS OF OPIOIDS**

207. Mallinckrodt contributed to Rhode Island's prescription drug crisis as a manufacturer of both branded and generic opioids. As a manufacturer of branded opioids, Mallinckrodt disseminated misleading messages about opioids for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain, including the benefits of ADF opioids, through both branded and unbranded channels. As a manufacturer of generic opioids, Mallinckrodt profited from its marketing and the sale of opioids for both legitimate prescriptions and diversion. Knowing this, Mallinckrodt failed to report suspicious orders, or even to have a system that would adequately identify them, thus contributing to the opioid crisis in Rhode Island.

**A. MALLINCKRODT FALSELY TRIVIALIZED, MISCHARACTERIZED, AND FAILED TO DISCLOSE THE KNOWN, SERIOUS RISK OF ADDICTION AND OVERSTATED OPIOIDS' EFFECT ON PATIENTS' FUNCTION AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

208. Mallinckrodt promoted its branded opioids and opioids generally, in a campaign that consistently mischaracterized the risk of addiction and made deceptive claims about functional improvement. Mallinckrodt conveyed these deceptive messages to Rhode Island prescribers through sales representatives, patient guides, and branded and unbranded websites and other marketing materials. It also disseminated deceptive messages through third party patient advocacy groups and professional associations who were financially tied to Mallinckrodt but seemed independent and, therefore, credible. Mallinckrodt distributed these messages, or facilitated their distribution, in Rhode Island with the intent that Rhode Island prescribers and/or consumers would rely on them in choosing to use opioids in general, and their opioids specifically, to treat chronic pain.

209. Mallinckrodt relies heavily on its sales representatives to convey its marketing messages and materials to prescribers in targeted, in-person settings. Not surprisingly,

Mallinckrodt’s sales representatives visited prescribers in Rhode Island. Publicly available Open Payments Data<sup>86</sup> shows that between the third quarter of 2013 and 2016, Mallinckrodt sales representatives visited Rhode Island prescribers at least 157 times, in visits that included some sort of payment<sup>87</sup> to the doctor.<sup>88</sup> This number likely understates the amount of “detailing” by Mallinckrodt sales representatives, as it reflects only visits in which a payment was provided.

210. Mallinckrodt’s promotional materials trivialized the risk of opioid addiction. Mallinckrodt’s former parent Company, Covidien, published a “patient resource,” called “Opioid Safe Use and Handling Guide,” which stated that: “Addiction does not often develop when taking opioid pain medicine as prescribed under the guidance of a healthcare provider, but it can occur;” and “Taking more than your prescribed amount of medication to treat your pain is not the same as addiction, but it can be very dangerous.”<sup>89</sup> The guide further explains that opioid tolerance is different from addiction, by explaining that tolerance may cause a patient to take more opioids in order to receive pain relief.

211. In a 2013 *Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals Policy Statement Regarding the Treatment of Pain and Control of Opioid Abuse*, which is still available online, Mallinckrodt stated that, “[s]adly, even today, pain frequently remains undiagnosed and either untreated or undertreated” and cites to a report that concludes that “the majority of people with pain use their prescription drugs properly, are not a source of misuse, and should not be stigmatized or denied

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<sup>86</sup> Open Payments is a federal program that collects information regarding visits and payments to doctors from pharmaceutical and medical device companies. Pharmaceutical and medical device companies are required to disclose this information under the Physician Payments Sunshine Act in the 2010 Affordable Care Act.

<sup>87</sup> Payments include activities such as promotional speaking, consulting, travel, and meals.

<sup>88</sup> Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Open Payments Data, <https://openpaymentsdata.cms.gov/>.

<sup>89</sup> CARES Alliance, “Opioid Safe Use and Handling Guide.”

access because of the misdeeds or carelessness of others.”

212. Until at least June 2007, Mallinckrodt sponsored pain-topics.org, a now defunct website that proclaimed to be an organization “dedicated to offering contents that are evidence-based, unbiased, non-commercial, and comply with the highest standards and principles of accrediting and other oversight organizations.”<sup>90</sup>

213. The FAQs section of pain-topics.org contained misleading information about a concept called “pseudoaddiction.” Pseudoaddiction is a concept invented to foster the misconception that signs of addiction, including shopping for doctors willing to newly write or refill prescriptions for opioids, or seeking early refills, actually reflected undertreated pain that should be addressed with more opioids—the medical equivalent of fighting fire by adding fuel. Specifically, the pain-topics.org website described pseudoaddiction as behavior that occurs in patients when pain is “undertreated” and includes patients becoming “very focused on obtaining opioid medications, and may be erroneously perceived as ‘drug seeking.’”

214. The website also characterizes as “misinformation” the fact that patients who use opioids for long-term chronic pain become addicted, and questions why the daily administration of medications such as insulin and antidepressants is not considered addiction when the daily administration of opioids is. In addition, the website states that the constant media attention regarding opioid addiction, misuse and overdose creates a “false impression” that opioids should never be prescribed, and the number of “celebrities and street users” along with those who overdose from misuse is minimal in comparison to those who benefit from chronic opioid therapy.

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<sup>90</sup>[https://web.archive.org/web/20070701065905/http://www.pain-topics.org:80/contacts\\_aboutus/index.php](https://web.archive.org/web/20070701065905/http://www.pain-topics.org:80/contacts_aboutus/index.php), (Last visited May 7, 2018.)

215. Furthermore, pain-topics.org implies that if a patient is diagnosed with a pain condition and non-opioids fail to provide relief, that patient is “right” for opioids. The website also says that the practice of not using opioids for long-term pain is “nonsensical.” It claims that patients who do not legitimately need opioids “do not exhibit obvious causes of pain” or provide other information such as MRIs, medical records, or an event which caused the chronic pain.

216. In addition, among its content, the website contained a handout titled Oxycodone Safety for Patients, which advised doctors that “[p]atients’ fears of opioid addiction should be expelled.” The handout stated the following misleading information regarding the risk of addiction: This handout is still available to prescribers and patients today.

217. Mallinckrodt also claimed—without evidence—that long-term opioid use would help patients resume their lives and jobs. Mallinckrodt’s website, in a section on “responsible use” of opioids, claimed that “[t]he effective pain management offered by medicines helps enable patients to stay in the workplace, enjoy interactions with family and friends, and remain an active member of society.”<sup>91</sup>

218. The Mallinckrodt-sponsored pain-topics.org website also claimed that long-term use of opioids for treatment of chronic pain conditions would improve patients’ function. The website stated that the benefits of using opioids for chronic pain include improvement to functions such as eating, sleeping, socializing, sexual activity, driving, walking and working. The website also claims that chronic opioid administration improves “quality of life.” The website further states that people who do not take opioids for long-term pain are “unable to participate in a normal family, vocational or other desired pursuits.”

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<sup>91</sup> Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, Responsible Use, <http://www.mallinckrodt.com/corporate-responsibility/responsible-use>.



**B. MALLINCKRODT MADE MISREPRESENTATIONS REGARDING ABUSE-DETERRENCE**

219. Mallinckrodt oversold its “abuse-deterrent” opioids as a reason that doctors could continue to prescribe their opioids. Mallinckrodt’s false and misleading marketing of the benefits of its abuse-deterrent opioids influenced prescribers to discount evidence of opioid addiction and abuse and attribute it to other, “less safe” opioids—thereby prolonging the opioid epidemic.

220. Mallinckrodt promoted both Exalgo (extended-release hydromorphone) and Xartemis XR (oxycodone and acetaminophen) as specifically formulated to reduce abuse. However, neither drug has specific approval as a drug with abuse-deterrent properties. Nevertheless, Mallinckrodt’s promotional materials stated that “the physical properties of EXALGO may make it difficult to extract the active ingredient using common forms of physical and chemical tampering, including chewing, crushing and dissolving.”<sup>92</sup> To underscore the limitations of the drug, however, one member of the FDA’s Controlled Substance Staff, however, noted in 2010 that hydromorphone has “a high abuse potential comparable to oxycodone” and further stated that “we predict that Exalgo will have high levels of abuse and diversion.”<sup>93</sup>

221. With respect to Xartemis XR, Mallinckrodt’s promotional materials stated that “XARTEMIS XR has technology that requires abusers to exert additional effort to extract the

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<sup>92</sup> Mallinckrodt Press Release, FDA Approves Mallinckrodt’s EXALGO® (hydromorphone HCl) Extended-Release Tablets 32 mg (CII) for Opioid-Tolerant Patients with Moderate-to-Severe Chronic Pain (Aug. 27, 2012), available at

<http://newsroom.medtronic.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=251324&p=irol-newsArticle&ID=2004159>

<sup>93</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/advisorycommittees/committeesmeetingmaterials/drugs/anestheticandanalgesicdrugproductsadvisorycommittee/ucm187490.pdf> at 157-58

active ingredient from the large quantity of inactive and deterrent ingredients.”<sup>94</sup> In anticipation of Xartemis XR’s approval, Mallinckrodt added 150-200 sales representatives to promote it, and CEO Mark Trudeau said the drug could generate “hundreds of millions in revenue.”<sup>95</sup> Upon information and belief, based on statements to prescribers in other jurisdictions and Mallinckrodt’s centralized, national marketing, statements touting Xartemis XR’s effectiveness in preventing abuse were made in Rhode Island.

222. None of Mallinckrodt’s “technology” addresses oral ingestion, and its statements regarding abuse-deterrent formulations give the misleading impression that doctors need not worry about the abuse of these opioids. The above representations and resulting implications that Exalgo and Xartemis XR would prevent abuse and were, therefore, safer than other opioids were false and misleading.

C. MALLINCKRODT DIRECTED FRONT GROUPS TO PROMOTE OPIOID USE AND COMBAT EFFORTS TO RESTRICT OPIOID PRESCRIBING

223. Patient advocacy groups and professional associations have been vehicles for Mallinckrodt to reach prescribers, patients, and policymakers. Mallinckrodt exerted influence and effective control over the messaging by these groups by providing funding directly to them. Mallinckrodt funded front groups in order to ensure supportive messages from these seemingly neutral and credible third parties, and their funding did, in fact, ensure such supportive messages—often at the expense of their own constituencies.

224. “Patient advocacy organizations and professional societies ... play a significant role in shaping health policy debates, setting national guidelines for patient treatment, raising

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<sup>94</sup> Mallinckrodt, Responsible Use of Opioid Pain Medications (Mar. 7, 2014) at 14.

<sup>95</sup> Samantha Liss, *Mallinckrodt banks on new painkillers for sales*, St. Louis Business Journal (Dec. 30, 2013), available at <http://argentcapital.com/mallinckrodt-banks-on-new-painkillers-for-sales/>

disease awareness, and educating the public.”<sup>96</sup> “Even small organizations—with ‘their large numbers and credibility with policymakers and the public’—have ‘extensive influence in specific disease areas.’ Larger organizations with extensive funding and outreach capabilities ‘likely have a substantial effect on policies relevant to their industry sponsors.’”<sup>97</sup>

225. Upon information and belief, by funding front groups, Mallinckrodt was able to exercise control over their false and deceptive messages. Mallinckrodt acted through the front groups to deceptively promote the use of opioids for the treatment of chronic pain, and to press for policies and legislation that would advance its interests.

226. Founded in 2006, the Alliance for Patient Access (“APA”) is a self-described patient advocacy and health professional organization that styles itself as a national network of physicians dedicated to ensuring patient access to approved therapies and appropriate clinical care. As of January 2018, the APA listed 30 “Associate Members and Financial Supporters,” which includes Mallinckrodt.<sup>98</sup> It is run by Woodberry Associates LLC, a lobbying firm that was also established in 2006.<sup>99</sup>

227. Among its activities, APA issued a “white paper” titled “Prescription Pain

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<sup>96</sup> U.S. Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee, Ranking Members’ Office, February 12, 2018 <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=808171> (“*Fueling an Epidemic*”), at 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Id.*

<sup>98</sup> APA’s board members, including Dr. Robert A. Yapundich, Dr. Jack D. Schim, and Dr. Howard Hoffberg, have also directly received funding from pharmaceutical companies including Mallinckrodt. See ProPublica’s Dollars for Docs database, available at <https://projects.propublica.org/docdollars/>

<sup>99</sup> Mary Chris Jaklevic, *Non-profit Alliance for Patient Access uses journalists and politicians to push Big Pharma’s agenda*, Health News Review (Oct. 2, 2017), <https://www.healthnewsreview.org/2017/10/non-profit-alliance-patient-access-uses-journalists-politicians-push-big-pharmas-agenda/>

Medication: Preserving Patient Access While Curbing Abuse.”<sup>100</sup> Among other things, the white paper criticizes prescription monitoring programs,<sup>101</sup> purporting to express concern that they are burdensome, not user friendly, and of questionable efficacy:

Prescription monitoring programs that are difficult to use and cumbersome can place substantial burdens on physicians and their staff, ultimately leading many to stop prescribing pain medications altogether. This forces patients to seek pain relief medications elsewhere, which may be much less convenient and familiar and may even be dangerous or illegal.

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In some states, physicians who fail to consult prescription monitoring databases before prescribing pain medications for their patients are subject to fines; those who repeatedly fail to consult the databases face loss of their professional licensure. Such penalties seem excessive and may inadvertently target older physicians in rural areas who may not be facile with computers and may not have the requisite office staff. Moreover, threatening and fining physicians in an attempt to induce compliance with prescription monitoring programs represents a system based on punishment as opposed to incentives. . . .

We cannot merely assume that these programs will reduce prescription pain medication use and abuse.<sup>102</sup>

228. The white paper also purports to express concern about policies that have been enacted in response to the prevalence of pill mills:

Although well intentioned, many of the policies designed to address this problem have made it difficult for legitimate pain management centers to operate. For instance, in some states, [pain management

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<sup>100</sup> Prescription Pain Medication: Preserving Patient Access While Curbing Abuse, Institute for Patient Access (Oct. 2013), [http://1yh21u3cjptv3xjder1dco9mx5s.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/PT\\_White-Paper\\_Finala.pdf](http://1yh21u3cjptv3xjder1dco9mx5s.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/PT_White-Paper_Finala.pdf).

<sup>101</sup> Prescription monitoring programs, such as Rhode Island’s Prescription Drug Monitoring Program serve to curb diversion by providing physicians with access to information regarding prescriptions of controlled substances patients have received during a certain period of time.

<sup>102</sup> Prescription Pain Medication: Preserving Patient Access While Curbing Abuse, Institute for Patient Access (Oct. 2013), [http://1yh21u3cjptv3xjder1dco9mx5s.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/PT\\_White-Paper\\_Finala.pdf](http://1yh21u3cjptv3xjder1dco9mx5s.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/PT_White-Paper_Finala.pdf).

centers] must be owned by physicians or professional corporations, must have a Board certified medical director, may need to pay for annual inspections, and are subject to increased record keeping and reporting requirements. . . . [I]t is not even certain that the regulations are helping prevent abuses.<sup>103</sup>

229. In addition, in an echo of earlier industry efforts to push back against what they termed “opiophobia,” the white paper laments the stigma associated with prescribing and taking pain medication:

Both pain patients and physicians can face negative perceptions and outright stigma. When patients with chronic pain can’t get their prescriptions for pain medication filled at a pharmacy, they may feel like they are doing something wrong—or even criminal. . . . Physicians can face similar stigma from peers. Physicians in non-pain specialty areas often look down on those who specialize in pain management—a situation fueled by the numerous regulations and fines that surround prescription pain medications.<sup>104</sup>

230. In conclusion, the white paper advocates for the use of opioids for chronic pain, stating, “[p]rescription pain medications, and specifically the opioids, can provide substantial relief for people who are recovering from surgery, afflicted by chronic painful diseases, or experiencing pain associated with other conditions that does not adequately respond to over-the-counter drugs.”<sup>105</sup>

231. The APA also lobbies Congress directly. In 2015, the APA signed onto a letter supporting legislation proposed to limit the ability of the DEA to police pill mills by enforcing the “suspicious orders” provision of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970, 21 U.S.C. §801 *et seq.* (“CSA” or “Controlled Substances Act”).<sup>106</sup> An internal U.S.

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<sup>103</sup> *Id.* at 5-6.

<sup>104</sup> *Id.* at 6.

<sup>105</sup> *Id.* at 7.

<sup>106</sup> Letter from Alliance for Patient Access, et al., to Congressmen Tom Marino, Marsha Blackburn, Peter Welch, and Judy Chu (Jan. 26, 2015).

Department of Justice (“DOJ”) memo stated that the proposed bill ““could actually result in increased diversion, abuse, and public health and safety consequences””<sup>107</sup> and, according to DEA Chief Administrative Law Judge John J. Mulrooney, the law would make it “all but logically impossible” to prosecute manufacturers and distributors, like Mallinckrodt here, in federal courts.<sup>108</sup> The law passed both houses of Congress and was signed into law in 2016. These efforts to prevent the implementation of programs and statutes that are designed to prevent diversion are in direct contravention of Mallinckrodt’s public claims that it is committed to fighting opioid misuse and preventing diversion. *See* ¶¶ 296, *infra*.

232. The U.S. Pain Foundation (“USPF”) was another front group with systematic connections and interpersonal relationship with Mallinckrodt. The USPF was one of the largest recipients of contributions from the Mallinckrodt and other opioid makers, collecting nearly \$3 million from opioid makers in payments between 2012 and 2015 alone. The USPF was also a critical component of Mallinckrodt’s lobbying efforts to reduce the limits on over-prescription. The U.S. Pain Foundation advertises its ties to Mallinckrodt, listing opioid manufacturers like Mallinckrodt, as “Platinum,” “Gold,” and “Basic” corporate members.<sup>109</sup> Industry front groups like the American Academy of Pain Management, the American Academy of Pain Medicine, the American Pain Society, and PhRMA are also members of varying levels in the USPF.

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[http://www.hoparx.org/images/hopa/advocacy/advocacy-activities/FINAL\\_Patient\\_Access\\_Letter\\_of\\_Support\\_House\\_Bill.pdf](http://www.hoparx.org/images/hopa/advocacy/advocacy-activities/FINAL_Patient_Access_Letter_of_Support_House_Bill.pdf).

<sup>107</sup> Bill Whitaker, Ex-DEA Agent: Opioid Crisis Fueled by Drug Industry and Congress, CBS News (Oct. 17, 2017), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ex-dea-agent-opioid-crisis-fueled-by-drug-industry-and-congress/> (hereinafter, “Whitaker, Opioid Crisis Fueled by Drug Industry”).

<sup>108</sup> John J. Mulrooney, II & Katherine E. Legel, Current Navigation Points in Drug Diversion Law: Hidden Rocks in Shallow, Murky, Drug-Infested Waters, 101 Marquette L. Rev. (forthcoming Feb. 2018), <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4108121-Marquette-Law-Review-Mulrooney-Legel.html>.

<sup>109</sup> *Id.* at 12; Transparency, U.S. Pain Foundation, <https://uspainfoundation.org/transparency/> (last accessed on March 9, 2018).

233. The USPF has made several misleading statements regarding opioids. For example, USPF claims that opioid treatment allows patients to function.<sup>110</sup> Additionally, Paul Gileno, the founder and president of the USPF, claimed that opioids allow people to “participate in daily life and be contributing members of society.”<sup>111</sup> The USPF made further misleading statements, including statements that involve veterans. For example, the USPF website discusses recent opioid prescribing guidelines released by the Department of Veteran Affairs and Department of Defense. The USPF describe these guidelines as “problematic” due to their advice to prescribe 20-50 morphine milligram equivalents (“MME”) per day with caution, and their warning against prescribing more than 90 MMEs per day. The group also suggests untreated chronic pain creates a risk of suicide, and therefore physicians should not necessarily be cautious in prescribing opioids to those with suicidal ideation.<sup>112</sup>

234. Upon information and belief, Mallinckrodt would not have supported these organizations if they did not disseminate messages that promoted Mallinckrodt’s business objectives in promoting the use of opioids for chronic, non-cancer pain, leaving Mallinckrodt with effective control over their messages and undermining their appearance of independence.

**D. MALLINCKRODT TOLD DOCTORS THAT OPIOIDS COULD BE TAKEN IN EVER HIGHER DOSES WITHOUT DISCLOSING THEIR GREATER RISKS**

235. Through third parties, Mallinckrodt falsely claimed to prescribers and consumers that opioids could be taken in ever-increasing strengths to obtain pain relief, without disclosing that higher doses increased the risk of addiction and overdose. This was particularly important because patients on opioids for more than a brief period develop tolerance, requiring increasingly

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<sup>110</sup> U.S. Pain Foundation, New Coalition Calls for Balanced Approach to Opioids, available at <https://uspainfoundation.org/news/new-coalition-calls-balanced-approach-opioids/>.

<sup>111</sup> Id.

<sup>112</sup> U.S. Pain Foundation, VA Restricts Opioids for Veterans and Military Service Members, available at <https://uspainfoundation.org/news/va-restricts-opioids-veteran/>.

high doses to achieve pain relief. Mallinckrodt apparently needed to generate a comfort level among doctors to ensure the doctors maintained patients on the drugs even at the high doses that became necessary.

236. Through its funding of the website pain-topics.org, Mallinckrodt claimed that there is no ceiling dosage for opioids, and that dosage should be determined by starting on low dosages and titrating up until a patient finds relief. The website does not disclose the dangers associated with higher doses, but claims that risks associated with opioids, such as death, overdoses and accidents, occur when patients do not take opioids as prescribed, or when the patient is taking other drugs or substances unknown to the prescribing doctor.

237. These claims conflict with the scientific evidence, including the known risks of high doses discussed above.

**VIII. PURDUE, MALLINCKRODT, TEVA, AND THE DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS  
DELIBARTELY DISREGARDED THEIR DUTIES TO REPORT AND  
TERMINATE SUSPICIOUS ORDERS**

**A. MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS HAVE A DUTY TO REPORT  
SUSPICIOUS ORDERS AND NOT SHIP THOSE ORDERS UNLESS DUE  
DILIGENCE DISPROVES THEIR SUSPICIONS**

238. The Defendant Distributors compounded the harm of deceptive marketing of opioids, described above, by facilitating the supply of far more opioids that could have been justified to serve that market. The failure of Purdue, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and Distributor Defendants to investigate, report, and terminate orders that they knew or should have known were suspicious, such as orders affiliated with the pill mills described above, breached both their regulatory and common law duties to Rhode Island.

239. First, by flooding Rhode Island with more opioids than could be used for legitimate medical purposes and by filling and failing to report orders that it should have realized were likely being diverted for illicit uses, Distributor Defendants. Purdue, Teva, and



Mallinckrodt breached their duty to exercise reasonable care in delivering narcotic substances and both created and failed to prevent a foreseeable risk of harm to Rhode Island.

240. Under the Rhode Island Controlled Substances Act, R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.01, *et seq.*, each manufacturer, distributor, prescriber, or dispenser of any controlled substances must maintain “effective controls against diversion,” and “comply with applicable federal, state, and local law,” or else risk loss of license and other action. R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.03, 3.04, and 21-28-3.28. Thus, Rhode Island law imposes its own duty on participants in the chain of supply of controlled substances to prevent their diversion.

241. Under the Federal Controlled Substances Act, Manufacturing and Distributor Defendants are required to register annually with the U.S. Attorney General in accordance with federal rules and regulations. *See* 21 U.S.C. § 822(a)(1). Any registration must be consistent with the public interest based on a consideration of, among other factors: maintenance of effective controls against diversion of particular controlled substances and any controlled substance in Schedule I or II compounded therefrom into other than legitimate medical, scientific, research, or industrial channels, by limiting the importation and bulk manufacture of such controlled substances to a number of establishments which can produce an adequate and uninterrupted supply of these substances under adequately competitive conditions for legitimate medical, scientific, research, and industrial purposes. *See*, 21 U.S.C. § 823.

242. Federal regulations further mandate that all registrants, manufacturers and distributors alike, “design and operate a system to disclose to the registrant suspicious orders of controlled substances.” 21 C.F.R. § 1301.74(b). Registrants are not entitled to be passive (but profitable) observers, but rather “shall inform the Field Division Office of the [U.S. Drug Enforcement] Administration in his area of suspicious orders when discovered by the registrant.”

*Id.* Suspicious orders include orders of unusual size, orders deviating substantially from a normal pattern, and orders of unusual frequency. *Id.* Other red flags may include, for example, “[o]rdering the same controlled substance from multiple distributors.”<sup>113</sup>

243. In sum, Distributor Defendants, along with Defendants Purdue, Teva, and Mallinckrodt, have several responsibilities with respect to suspicious orders of opioids. First, they must set up a system designed to detect such orders. That would include reviewing their own data, relying on their observations of prescribers and pharmacies, and following up on reports or concerns of potential diversion. Second, they must also stop shipment on any order which is flagged as suspicious and only ship orders which were flagged as potentially suspicious if, after conducting due diligence, they can determine that the order is not likely to be diverted into illegal channels.<sup>114</sup> And, third, all flagged orders must be reported to relevant enforcement authorities.<sup>115</sup>

*1. Defendants Understood the Importance of Their Reporting Obligations*

244. The purpose of the reporting rules is to create a “closed” system intended to reduce the diversion of these drugs out of legitimate channels into the illicit market, while at the same time providing the legitimate drug industry with a unified approach to narcotic and dangerous drug control.<sup>116</sup>

245. Trade organizations to which the Distributor Defendants belong have

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<sup>113</sup> See Letter from Joseph T. Rannazzisi, Deputy Assistant Adm’r, Office of Diversion Control, U.S. Drug Enforcement Admin. (the DEA), U.S. Dep’t of Justice, to Cardinal Health (Sept. 27, 2006)(hereafter Rannazzisi Letter, Sept. 27, 2006).

<sup>114</sup> See *Masters Pharmaceutical, Inc. v. DEA*, 861 F.3d 206, 212 (D.C. Cir. 2017) (Describing the “Shipping Requirement” as requiring the distributor to decline to ship the suspicious order, or to ship the order only if due diligence demonstrates that the order is not likely to be diverted into illegal channels).

<sup>115</sup> *Id.*

<sup>116</sup> See 1970 U.S.C.C.A.N. 4566, 4571-72.

acknowledged that wholesale distributors such as the Distributor Defendants have been responsible for reporting suspicious orders for more than 40 years.<sup>117</sup> The Healthcare Distribution Management Association (“HDMA,” now known as the Healthcare Distribution Alliance (“HDA”)), a trade association of pharmaceutical distributors to which Distributor Defendants belong, has long taken the position that distributors have responsibilities to “prevent diversion of controlled prescription drugs” not only because they have statutory and regulatory obligations do so, but “as responsible members of society.”<sup>118</sup> Guidelines established by the HDA also explain that distributors, “[a]t the center of a sophisticated supply chain . . . are uniquely situated to perform due diligence in order to help support the security of the controlled substances they deliver to their customer.”<sup>119</sup>

246. The DEA also repeatedly has made clear that Defendant Distributors’ and Manufacturers’ obligations obligate them to report and decline to fill suspicious orders. The DEA, for example, advised in a September 27, 2006 letter to every commercial entity registered to distribute controlled substances (which included the Distributor Defendants) that they are “one of the key components of the distribution chain. If the closed system is to function properly . . .

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<sup>117</sup> See Brief for HDMA and NACDS, *supra* note 85, 2016 WL 1321983, at \*4 (“[R]egulations . . . in place for more than 40 years require distributors to report suspicious orders of controlled substances to DEA based on information readily available to them (e.g., a pharmacy’s placement of unusually frequent or large orders).”).

<sup>118</sup> See *Amicus Curiae* Br. of Healthcare Distribution Management Association (HDMA) in Support of Cardinal Health, Inc.’s Motion for Injunction Pending Appeal, No. 12-5061 (D.C. Cir. Mar. 7, 2012), Doc. No. 1362415 at 4; Brief for Healthcare Distribution Management Association and National Association of Chain Drug Stores as *Amici Curiae* in Support of Neither Party, *Masters Pharmaceuticals, Inc. v. DEA*, 2012 WL 1321983, at \*2 (D.C. Cir. Apr. 4, 2016).

<sup>119</sup> Healthcare Distribution Management Association (HDMA) Industry Compliance Guidelines: Reporting Suspicious Orders and Preventing Diversion of Controlled Substances, filed in *Cardinal Health, Inc. v. Holder*, No. 12-5061 (D.C. Cir. Mar. 7, 2012), Doc. No. 1362415 (App’x B at 1).

distributors must be vigilant in deciding whether a prospective customer can be trusted to deliver controlled substances only for lawful purposes. This responsibility is critical, as . . . the illegal distribution of controlled substances has a substantial and detrimental effect on the health and general welfare of the American people.”<sup>120</sup> The DEA’s September 27, 2006 letter also expressly reminded the Distributor Defendants that registrants, *in addition* to reporting suspicious orders, have a “statutory responsibility to exercise due diligence to avoid filling suspicious orders that might be diverted into other than legitimate medical, scientific, and industrial channels.”<sup>121</sup>

247. The DEA sent another letter to each of the Distributor Defendants, and to the Purdue as well, on December 27, 2007, reminding them that, as registered manufacturers and distributors of controlled substances, they share, and must each abide by, statutory and regulatory duties to “maintain effective controls against diversion” and “design and operate a system to disclose to the registrant suspicious orders of controlled substances.”<sup>122</sup> The DEA’s December 27, 2007 letter reiterated the obligation to detect, report, and not fill suspicious orders and provided detailed guidance on what constitutes a suspicious order and how to report (*e.g.*, by specifically identifying an order as suspicious, not merely transmitting data to the DEA). Finally, the letter references the Revocation of Registration issued in *Southwood Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*, 72 Fed. Reg. 36,487-01 (July 3, 2007), which discusses the obligation to

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<sup>120</sup> See Rannazzisi Letter, Sept. 27, 2006, (“This letter is being sent to every commercial entity in the United States registered with the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to distribute controlled substances. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate the responsibilities of controlled substance distributors in view of the prescription drug abuse problem our nation currently faces.”), *filed in Cardinal Health, Inc. v. Holder*, No. 1:12-cv-00185-RBW (D.D.C. Feb. 10, 2012), ECF No. 14-51

<sup>121</sup> See Rannazzisi Letter, Sept. 27, 2006.

<sup>122</sup> See Letter, Joseph T. Rannazzisi, Deputy Assistant Adm’r, Office of Diversion Control, DEA, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, to Cardinal Health (Dec. 27, 2007), *filed in Cardinal Health, Inc. v. Holder*, No. 1:12-cv-00185-RBW (D.D.C. Feb. 10, 2012), ECF No. 14-8.

report suspicious orders and “some criteria to use when determining whether an order is suspicious.”<sup>123</sup>

2. *Purdue, Teva, Mallinckrodt, And Distributor Defendants Have Repeatedly Violated Their Reporting Requirements*

248. Defendant Distributors, have faced repeated faced enforcement actions for their failure to comply with their obligations to report and decline suspicious, making clear both that they were repeatedly reminded of their duties, and that they frequently failed to meet them:

- a. On April 24, 2007, the DEA issued an *Order to Show Cause and Immediate Suspension Order* against the AmerisourceBergen Orlando, Florida distribution center (“Orlando Facility”) alleging a failure to maintain effective controls against diversion of controlled substances. On June 22, 2007, AmerisourceBergen entered into a settlement that resulted in the suspension of its DEA registration;
- b. On November 28, 2007, the DEA issued an *Order to Show Cause and Immediate Suspension Order* against the Cardinal Health Auburn, Washington Distribution Center (“Auburn Facility”) for failure to maintain effective controls against diversion of hydrocodone;
- c. On December 5, 2007, the DEA issued an *Order to Show Cause and Immediate Suspension Order* against the Cardinal Health Lakeland, Florida Distribution Center (“Lakeland Facility”) for failure to maintain effective controls against diversion of hydrocodone;
- d. On December 7, 2007, the DEA issued an *Order to Show Cause and Immediate Suspension Order* against the Cardinal Health Swedesboro, New Jersey Distribution Center (“Swedesboro Facility”) for failure to maintain effective controls against diversion of hydrocodone;
- e. On January 30, 2008, the DEA issued an *Order to Show Cause and Immediate Suspension Order* against the Cardinal Health Stafford, Texas Distribution Center (“Stafford Facility”) for failure to maintain effective controls against diversion of hydrocodone;
- f. On May 2, 2008, McKesson Corporation entered into an *Administrative Memorandum of Agreement* (“2008 MOA”) with the DEA which provided that McKesson would “maintain a compliance program designed to detect and prevent the diversion of controlled substances, inform DEA of suspicious orders required by 21 C.F.R. § 1301.74(b),

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<sup>123</sup> See Rannazzisi Letter, Sept. 27, 2006.

and follow the procedures established by its Controlled Substance Monitoring Program”;

- g. On September 30, 2008, Cardinal Health entered into a *Settlement and Release Agreement and Administrative Memorandum of Agreement* with the DEA related to its Auburn Facility, Lakeland Facility, Swedesboro Facility and Stafford Facility. The document also referenced allegations by the DEA that Cardinal failed to maintain effective controls against the diversion of controlled substances at its distribution facilities located in McDonough, Georgia (“McDonough Facility”), Valencia, California (“Valencia Facility”) and Denver, Colorado (“Denver Facility”); and
- h. On February 2, 2012, the DEA issued an *Order to Show Cause and Immediate Suspension Order* against the Lakeland Facility for failure to maintain effective controls against diversion of oxycodone. This *Order* alleged, among other things, that Cardinal Lakeland failed to conduct “meaningful due diligence of its retail pharmacy customers, including its retail chain pharmacy customers, to ensure that controlled substances were not diverted into other than legitimate channels.”<sup>124</sup> The *Order* resulted in a two-year suspension of Cardinal’s registration to distribute Schedule II narcotics from the Lakeland Facility.

249. These violations reflect a pervasive pattern and practice over the last decade of failing to report and stop suspicious orders that would have affected Defendant Distributors’ operations in and the supply of opioids into Rhode Island.

250. Defendant McKesson recently admitted to breach of its duties to monitor, report, and prevent suspicious orders and agreed to pay a \$150 million civil penalty for the violations. Pursuant to an Administrative Memorandum of Agreement (“2017 Agreement”) entered into between McKesson and the DEA in January 2017, McKesson admitted that, at various times during the period from January 1, 2009 through the effective date of the Agreement (January 17, 2017) it “did not identify or report to [the] DEA certain orders placed by certain pharmacies which should have been detected by McKesson as suspicious based on the guidance contained in

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<sup>124</sup> *Settlement Agreement* at para. G (1), December 20, 2016

the DEA Letters.”<sup>125</sup> Further, the 2017 Agreement specifically finds that McKesson “distributed controlled substances to pharmacies even though those McKesson Distribution Centers should have known that the pharmacists practicing within those pharmacies had failed to fulfill their corresponding responsibility to ensure that controlled substances were dispensed pursuant to prescriptions issued for legitimate medical purposes by practitioners acting in the usual course of their professional practice, as required by 21 C.F.R § 1306.04(a).”<sup>126</sup> McKesson admitted that, during this time period, it “failed to maintain effective controls against diversion of particular controlled substances into other than legitimate medical, scientific and industrial channels by sales to certain of its customers in violation of the CSA and the CSA’s implementing regulations, 21 C.F.R. Part 1300, *et seq.*, at the McKesson Distribution Centers.” These violations, upon information and belief, took place at the distribution centers supplying the Rhode Island area and permitted diversion of prescription opioids into Rhode Island.

251. As the *Washington Post* and *60 Minutes* recently reported, DEA staff recommended a much larger penalty, as much as \$1 billion, and delicensing of certain facilities.<sup>127</sup> A DEA memo outlining the investigative findings in connection with the administrative case against 12 McKesson distribution centers included in the 2017 Settlement stated that McKesson “[s]upplied controlled substances in support of criminal diversion activities”; “[i]gnored blatant diversion”; had a “[p]attern of raising thresholds arbitrarily”;

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<sup>125</sup> Settlement Agreement and Release between the U.S. and McKesson Corp., at 5 (Jan. 17, 2017) [hereinafter “2017 Settlement Agreement and Release”] (“McKesson acknowledges that, at various times during the Covered Time Period [2009-2017], it did not identify or report to DEA certain orders placed by certain pharmacies, which should have been detected by McKesson as suspicious, in a manner fully consistent with the requirements set forth in the 2008 MOA.”), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/928471/download>.

<sup>126</sup> *Id.*

<sup>127</sup> Lenny Bernstein and Scott Higham, “‘We Feel Like Our System Was Hijacked’: DEA Agents Say a Huge Opioid Case Ended in a Whimper, *Washington Post* (Dec. 17, 2017).

“[f]ailed to review orders or suspicious activity”; and “[i]gnored [the company’s] own procedures designed to prevent diversion.”<sup>128</sup>

252. In short, McKesson, was “neither rehabilitated nor deterred by the 2008 [agreement],” as a DEA official working on the case noted.<sup>129</sup> Quite the opposite, ““their bad acts continued and escalated to a level of egregiousness not seen before.””<sup>130</sup> According to statements of “DEA investigators, agents and supervisors who worked on the McKesson case” reported in the *Washington Post*, “the company paid little or no attention to the unusually large and frequent orders placed by pharmacies, some of them knowingly supplying the drug rings.”<sup>131</sup> “Instead, the DEA officials said, the company raised its own self-imposed limits, known as thresholds, on orders from pharmacies and continued to ship increasing amounts of drugs in the face of numerous red flags.”<sup>132</sup>

253. Purdue’s failure to report suspicious activity was the subject of detailed reporting by the *Los Angeles Times*, which relied, in part, on internal Purdue documents and interviews with former employees and law enforcement. Since at least 2002, Purdue has maintained a database of health care providers suspected of inappropriately prescribing OxyContin or other opioids. Physicians could be added to this database based on observed indicators of illicit prescribing such as excessive numbers of patients, cash transactions, patient overdoses, and unusual prescribing of the highest-strength pills (80 mg OxyContin pills or “80s,” as they were

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<sup>128</sup> *Id.*

<sup>129</sup> *Id.* (alteration in original).

<sup>130</sup> *Id.* (quoting a March 30, 2015 DEA memo).

<sup>131</sup> *Id.*

<sup>132</sup> *Id.*



known on the street, were a prime target for diversion).<sup>133</sup> Health care providers added to the database were supposedly no longer were detailed, and sales representatives received no compensation tied to these providers' prescriptions.

254. Yet, Purdue failed to cut off these providers' opioid supply at the pharmacy level—meaning Purdue continued to generate sales revenue from their prescriptions—and failed to report these providers to state medical boards or law enforcement. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, which first reported this story, Purdue's former senior compliance officer acknowledged that in five years of investigating suspicious pharmacies, the company never stopped the supply of its opioids to a pharmacy, even where Purdue employees personally witnessed the diversion of its drugs.

255. The same was true of prescribers. For example, despite Purdue's knowledge of illicit prescribing from one Los Angeles, CA clinic which its district manager called an "organized drug ring," Purdue did not report its suspicions from 2009 until 2013—long after law enforcement shut it down and not until the ring prescribed more than 1.1 million OxyContin tablets.

256. The New York Attorney General found that Purdue placed 103 New York health care providers on its No-Call List between January 1, 2008 and March 7, 2015, and that Purdue's sales representatives had detailed approximately two-thirds of these providers, some quite extensively, making more than a total of 1,800 sales calls to their offices over a six-year period"

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<sup>133</sup> Harriet Ryan, Lisa Girion, and Scott Glover, "More Than 1 Million OxyContin Pills Ended up in the Hands of Criminals and Addicts. What the Drugmaker Knew," *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2016, <http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-me-oxycontin-part2/>

and spending approximately \$3,000 dollars in meal expenses for 38 of these providers.<sup>134</sup>

257. In Rhode Island, for example, Purdue detailed another prescriber for three years after he told Purdue in a sales call that he was on the “DEA’s radar” for prescribing to patients who were diverting their products (calling in early refills despite not actually taking the drug per the patients’ toxicology screenings). Purdue also detailed Jerrold Rosenberg even after a *New York Times* article discussing his relationships with Insys appeared and despite previous reporting to the Abuse and Diversion Detection program. Purdue also detailed a prescriber, Dr. Bartel Crisafi, five months after he told the Purdue sales representative he was disciplined for overprescribing, and continued to detail Dr. Crisafi through at least June 2017. Purdue not only continued to market its drugs to these prescribers, but failed to report any of them to the Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure & Discipline.

258. Dr. Crisafi wrote 40 prescriptions of Purdue opioids covered by Rhode Island’s Medical Assistance program resulting in charges of \$41,619.29. Dr. Rosenberg wrote 189 prescriptions of Purdue opioids covered by Rhode Island’s Medical Assistance program resulting in charges of \$29,980. These are provided as examples of improper claims paid for by the State of Rhode Island, but represent only a fraction of claims that resulted from Purdue’s failure to report suspicious prescribing and its fraudulent marketing.

259. When Purdue learned one prescriber, Dr. Fathalla Mashali, was under investigation in Rhode Island, it barred its sales representatives from seeing him in this state but continued to visit him at separate clinics he operated in Massachusetts. Purdue had a system of red flags for suspicion prescribing and diversion. On information and belief Purdue observed red

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<sup>134</sup> Attorney General of the State of New York, In the Matter of Purdue Pharma L.P., Assurance No.: 15-151, Assurance of Discontinuance Under Executive Law Section 63, Subdivision 15 at 5.

flags at clinics he operated, including overbooking patients, visiting patients outside of examination rooms, high rates of staff turnover, and destruction of medical records.

260. Dr. Fashali ultimately lost his license to practice medicine in Rhode Island in August 2013, following an investigation that found, *inter alia*, that he continued to prescribe opioids to patients he knew to be using them improperly, including at least one who died of an overdose. The Rhode Island Department of Health found Dr. Mashali to be an “immediate threat to the health, welfare and safety of the public” in revoking his license. During the time the Rhode Island case was pending, however, he continued to see patients, including, upon information and belief, Rhode Island residents, in Massachusetts and other patients who diverted drugs to Rhode Island. Purdue sales representatives did not stop detailing him or, upon information and belief, report him to law enforcement or disciplinary authorities. Ultimately Dr. Mashali pleaded guilty to defrauding Medicare in Massachusetts in 2017 and [was sent](#) to prison for 8 years.

261. Purdue has long been aware that its drugs, in particular OxyContin, have been diverted from legitimate channels, including both that certain prescribers write prescriptions knowing they are not for any legitimate medical purposes, and that throughout the supply chain, its pills are targets for theft. This concern was part and parcel of Purdue’s efforts to obtain exclusivity for a tamper resistant OxyContin, discussed above. Purdue did not, however, take necessary steps to ensure that it did not fuel a black market in its opioids.

262. Purdue had knowledge of criminal diversion in the late 1990s and early 2000s, both nationally and in Rhode Island. CVS pharmacy notified Purdue in 2002 that in the Boston region (encompassing Rhode Island), it considered no longer stocking OxyContin given that CVS stores alone experienced more than 100 robberies per year. CVS conveyed that not only

were the robberies damaging to society as a whole, but that rendered OxyContin unprofitable to stock, led staff to quit, and forced CVS to invest in upgrading security systems at its own cost.. Although in 2002, Purdue agreed to finance the cost of some of these security upgrades Purdue did not address the root of the problem – the oversupply of its opioids and the demand for their non-medical use. A 2002 memo noted “[s]everal accounts [i.e., customers] have said that OxyContin, not prescription drug abuse, is the issue.” Purdue sought to respond to the immediate financial needs of pharmacies when its own needs were threatened, but did not take steps such as reducing the supply of opioids and truthfully marketing their risks.

263. In addition, as laid out in greater detail below, Mallinckrodt deceptively and unfairly failed to put into place appropriate procedures to ensure suspicious orders would be reported to authorities and instead, continued to fill orders which supplied far more opioids than were justified. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Each of Mallinckrodt’s shipments of opioids into the stream of commerce in Rhode Island without an adequate system in place to investigate, report, and refuse to fill orders that they knew or should have known were suspicious violated both its common law duties and its statutory duties under Rhode Island law.

264. In 2011, the DEA began to investigate Mallinckrodt after DEA investigators noted large amounts of Mallinckrodt’s oxycodone being sent to Florida.<sup>135</sup> In 2017, Mallinckrodt paid a \$35 million fine for its failure to put into place appropriate procedures to ensure suspicious orders would be reported, and its failure to report suspicious orders.<sup>136</sup> It

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<sup>135</sup> Lenny Bernstein and Scott Higham, *The Government’s Struggle to Hold Opioid Manufacturers Accountable*, The Washington Post, April 2, 2017.

<sup>136</sup> See Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Mallinckrodt Agrees to Pay Record \$35 Million Settlement for Failure to Report Suspicious Orders of Pharmaceutical Drugs and for

further entered in to a Memorandum of Agreement in 2017 (the “MOA”) which obligated Mallinckrodt to use “all available transaction information” to identify and report suspicious orders. The deficiencies uncovered by the DEA were at a company-wide level, not limited to shipments to Florida. In addition, as a result of their failings in Florida, drugs distributed to that state supplied a national black market including, upon information and belief, in Rhode Island.

265. The Department of Justice and DEA determined that Mallinckrodt ignored its responsibility to report suspicious orders of as many as 500 million of its pills that were sent to Florida from 2008 to 2012, which was 66% of all oxycodone sold in the state. According to the *Washington Post*, an internal summary of the federal case against Mallinckrodt found that “Mallinckrodt’s response was that ‘everyone knew what was going on in Florida but they had no duty to report it.’”

266. In the press release accompanying the settlement, the Department of Justice stated that Mallinckrodt “did not meet its obligations to detect and notify DEA of suspicious orders of controlled substances such as oxycodone, the abuse of which is part of the current opioid epidemic. These suspicious order monitoring requirements exist to prevent excessive sales of controlled substances, like oxycodone . . . . Mallinckrodt’s actions and omissions formed a link in the chain of supply that resulted in millions of oxycodone pills being sold on the street. . . . ‘Manufacturers and distributors have a crucial responsibility to ensure that controlled substances do not get into the wrong hands’ . . . .”<sup>137</sup>

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Recordkeeping Violations (July 11, 2017), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/mallinckrodt-agrees-pay-record-35-million-settlement-failure-report-suspicious-orders>.

<sup>137</sup> See Press Release, U.S. Dep’t of Justice, Mallinckrodt Agrees to Pay Record \$35 Million Settlement for Failure to Report Suspicious Orders of Pharmaceutical Drugs and for Recordkeeping Violations (July 11, 2017), <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/mallinckrodt-agrees-pay-record-35-million-settlement-failure-report-suspicious-orders>.

267. Among the allegations resolved by the settlement, the government alleged “Mallinckrodt failed to design and implement an effective system to detect and report ‘suspicious orders’ for controlled substances—orders that are unusual in their frequency, size, or other patterns . . . [and] Mallinckrodt supplied distributors, and the distributors then supplied various U.S. pharmacies and pain clinics, an increasingly excessive quantity of oxycodone pills without notifying DEA of these suspicious orders.”<sup>138</sup>

268. The 2017 Mallinckrodt MOA further details the DEA’s allegations regarding Mallinckrodt’s failures to fulfill its legal duties as an opioid manufacturer:

a. With respect to its distribution of oxycodone and hydrocodone products, Mallinckrodt's alleged failure to distribute these controlled substances in a manner authorized by its registration and Mallinckrodt's alleged failure to operate an effective suspicious order monitoring system and to report suspicious orders to the DEA when discovered as required by and in violation of 21 C.F.R. § 1301.74(b). The above includes, but is not limited to Mallinckrodt's alleged failure to:

- i. conduct adequate due diligence of its customers;
- ii. detect and report to the DEA orders of unusual size and frequency;
- iii. detect and report to the DEA orders deviating substantially from normal patterns including, but not limited to, those identified in letters from the DEA Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, to registrants dated September 27, 2006 and December 27, 2007:
  1. orders that resulted in a disproportionate amount of a substance which is most often abused going to a particular geographic region where there was known diversion,
  2. orders that purchased a disproportionate amount of a substance which is most often abused compared to other products, and

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<sup>138</sup> *Id.*

3. orders from downstream customers to distributors who were purchasing from multiple different distributors, of which Mallinckrodt was aware;
- iv. use “chargeback” information from its distributors to evaluate suspicious orders. Chargebacks include downstream purchasing information tied to certain discounts, providing Mallinckrodt with data on buying patterns for Mallinckrodt products; and
- v. take sufficient action to prevent recurrence of diversion by downstream customers after receiving concrete information of diversion of Mallinckrodt product by those downstream customers.<sup>139</sup>

269. In connection with the settlement, Mallinckrodt admitted that “[a]s a registrant under the CSA, Mallinckrodt had a responsibility to maintain effective controls against diversion, including a requirement that it review and monitor these sales and report suspicious orders to DEA.”<sup>140</sup> Mallinckrodt further stated that it “recognizes the importance of the prevention of diversion of the controlled substances they manufacture” and agreed that it would “design and operate a system that meets the requirements of 21 CFR 1301.74(b) . . . [such that it would] utilize all available transaction information to identify suspicious orders of any Mallinckrodt product.”<sup>141</sup> Mallinckrodt specifically agreed “to notify DEA of any diversion and/or suspicious circumstances involving any Mallinckrodt controlled substances that Mallinckrodt discovers.”<sup>142</sup>

270. Mallinckrodt also acknowledged that at certain times prior to January 1, 2012,

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<sup>139</sup> Administrative Memorandum of Agreement between the United States Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and Mallinckrodt, plc. and its subsidiary Mallinckrodt, LLC (July 10, 2017), <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edmi/press-release/file/986026/download>. (“2017 Mallinckrodt MOA”), at 2-3.

<sup>140</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>141</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>142</sup> *Id.*

certain aspects of its “system to monitor and detect suspicious orders did not meet the standards outlined in letters from the DEA Deputy Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, to registrants dated September 27, 2006 and December 27, 2007.”<sup>143</sup>

271. Mallinckrodt’s actions as laid out in the MOA allowed opioids to enter illicit channels of commerce, including upon information and belief in Rhode Island. However, both before and after the MOA was put into place, Mallinckrodt did not report any suspicious orders in Rhode Island.

272. Teva, for its part, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] was in a position to identify suspicious orders; but it did not make any reports to the Rhode Island Department of Health or, on information and belief, to any federal entity with jurisdiction in Rhode Island, concerning any Rhode Island pharmacy’s orders.

B. SINCE 2014, AND UPON INFORMATION AND BELIEF, BEFORE THAT TIME, NO DEFENDANT REPORTED ANY SUSPICIOUS PRESCRIBER OR PHARMACY TO THE RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF PHARMACY. PURDUE AND THE DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS WORKED TOGETHER TO SUSTAIN THEIR MARKETS AND BOOST SALES OF THEIR PRODUCTS

273. Upon information and belief, the Distributor Defendants and Purdue also worked with trade or other organizations, such as the HDA and Pain Care Forum (“PCF”), to safeguard the market for opioids.

274. HDA's website indicates that each of the Distributor Defendants and Purdue were members of the HAD. Upon information and belief, the HDA and the Distributor Defendants sought the active membership and participation of Purdue and others by advocating that one of the benefits of membership included the ability to develop direct relationships between Manufacturers and Distributors at high executive levels. The HDA touted the benefits of

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<sup>143</sup> Id.



membership to the Purdue, advocating that membership included the ability to, among other things, “network one on one with manufacturer executives at HDA’s members-only Business and Leadership Conference,” “networking with HDA wholesale distributor members,” “opportunities to host and sponsor HDA Board of Directors events,” “participate on HDA committees, task forces and working groups with peers and trading partners,” and “make connections.”<sup>144</sup>

275. After becoming members, the Distributors and manufacturers were eligible to participate on councils, committees, task forces and working groups, including the:

- a. Industry Relations Council,
- b. Business Technology Committee,
- c. Logistics Operation Committee,
- d. Manufacturer Government Affairs Advisory Committee, and
- e. Contracts and Chargebacks Working Group<sup>145</sup>

276. HDA also offers a multitude of conferences, including annual business and leadership conferences. HDA advertises these conferences to Purdue as an opportunity to “bring together high-level executives, thought leaders and influential managers . . . to hold strategic business discussions on the most pressing industry issues.”<sup>146</sup> These conferences provided HDA members “unmatched opportunities to network with [their] peers and trading partners at all

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<sup>144</sup> Manufacturer Membership Benefits, Healthcare Distribution Alliance, <https://www.healthcaredistribution.org/~media/pdfs/membership/manufacturer-membership-benefits.ashx?la=en>.

<sup>145</sup> Councils and Committees, Healthcare Distribution Alliance, (accessed on November 12, 2017), <https://www.healthcaredistribution.org/about/councils-and-committees>

<sup>146</sup> Business and Leadership Conference – Information for Manufacturers, Healthcare Distribution Alliance, (accessed on September 14, 2017), <https://www.healthcaredistribution.org/events/2015-business-and-leadership-conference/blc-for-manufacturers>.

levels of the healthcare distribution industry”<sup>147</sup> and an opportunity for Manufacturing and Distributor Defendants to work together.

277. Distributor Defendants, Purdue, Mallinckrodt, and Teva, also coordinated in other ways, including, according to articles published by the Center for Public Integrity and the Associated Press, the Pain Care Forum—whose members include the Purdue and the HDA—has been lobbying on behalf of opioid manufacturers and distributors for “more than a decade.”<sup>148</sup> This coordination in their lobbying further supports an inference that Distributor Defendants and Purdue worked together.

278. The data that reveals and/or confirms the identity of each wrongful opioid distributor is stored in the DEA’s confidential ARCOS (Automation of Reports and Consolidated Orders System) database.<sup>149</sup> The data necessary to identify with specificity the transactions that were suspicious is in possession of the Distributor Defendants, but has not been disclosed to the public.

279. Yet, publicly available information confirms that Purdue, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants funneled far more opioids into Rhode Island than could have been expected to serve legitimate medical use, and ignored other red flags of suspicious orders. This information, along with the information known only to Purdue and Distributor Defendants, would have alerted them to potentially suspicious orders of opioids in and affecting the Rhode

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<sup>147</sup> *Id.*

<sup>148</sup> Matthew Perrone, Pro-Painkiller echo chamber shaped policy amid drug epidemic, The Center for Public Integrity (Sept. 19, 2017), available at <https://www.publicintegrity.org/2016/09/19/20201/pro-painkiller-echo-chamber-shaped-policy-amid-drug-epidemic>; PAIN CARE FORUM 2012 Meetings Schedule, (last updated Dec. 2011), available at <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3108982/PAIN-CARE-FORUM-Meetings-Schedule-amp.pdf>

<sup>149</sup> *See Madel v. USDOJ*, 784 F.3d 448 (8th Cir. 2015).

Island.

280. Rhode Island's information and belief rests upon the following facts:

- a. distributors and manufacturers have access to detailed transaction-level data on the sale and distribution of opioids, which can be broken down by zip code, prescriber, and pharmacy and includes the volume of opioids, dose, and the distribution of other controlled and non-controlled substances;
- b. manufacturers make use of that data to target their marketing and, for that purpose, regularly monitor the activity of doctors and pharmacies;
- c. manufacturers regularly visit pharmacies and doctors to promote and provide their products and services, which allows them to observe red flags of diversion, as described above;
- d. Distributor Defendants together accounted for the majority of opioids distributed in the United States and each plays such a large part in the distribution of opioids that their own volume provides a ready vehicle for measuring the overall flow of opioids into a pharmacy or geographic area; and,
- e. Purdue purchased chargeback data (in return for discounts to Distributor Defendants) that allowed them to monitor the combined flow of opioids into a pharmacy or geographic area.<sup>150</sup>

281. Upon information and belief, Purdue, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants engaged in this practice of paying rebates and/or chargebacks to wholesale drug distributors for sales of prescription opioids to help them boost sales and better target their marketing efforts. The *Washington Post* has described the practice as industry-wide.

282. Publicly available ARCOS data shows the high volume of oxycodone and other opioids distributed to Rhode Island. Distribution of oxycodone into Rhode Island from 2010 to 2016 was 1.4 times the national average. In 2015, the volume of opioids prescribed in Rhode Island amounted to 557 mg MED per person. This is the equivalent to a one week's supply of

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<sup>150</sup> See, e.g., 2017 Mallinckrodt MOA at 5 (acknowledging that “[a]s part of their business model Mallinckrodt collects transaction information, referred to as chargeback data, from their direct customers (distributors).”).

high dose opioids for each person in the state, and roughly one month’s supply of a low dose opioid prescription (for example, 5 mg of hydrocodone dosed 4 times a day) for each Rhode Islander.<sup>151</sup>

283. The high (and relatively higher) volume of opioids prescribed and distributed in Rhode Island should have raised a red flag that not all of the prescriptions being ordered could be for legitimate medical uses.

284. In addition, the increase in fatal overdoses from prescription opioids has been widely publicized for years

285. Based upon these red flags, it can be fairly inferred that Distributors, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and Purdue had information about suspicious orders that they did not report, and that they failed to exercise due diligence before filling orders from which drugs were diverted into illicit uses in Rhode Island.

**C. THE DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS, PURDUE, AND MALLINCKRODT HID THEIR LACK OF COOPERATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FALSELY CLAIMED TO BE ACTIVELY WORKING TO PREVENT DIVERSION**

286. After being caught failing to comply with their obligations, Distributor Defendants made broad promises to correct their actions and insisted that they sought to be good corporate citizens. As part of McKesson’s 2008 Settlement with the DEA, McKesson claimed to have “taken steps to prevent such conduct from occurring in the future” including specific measures delineated in a “Compliance Addendum” to the Settlement. In 2017, McKesson paid \$150 million to resolve yet another investigation by the U.S. DOJ for again failing to report suspicious orders of certain drugs, including opioids.

287. More generally, the Distributor Defendants publicly portrayed themselves as

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<sup>151</sup> See <http://opioid.amfar.org/RI>

committed to working with law enforcement, opioid manufacturers, and others, to prevent diversion of these dangerous drugs. For example, Defendant Cardinal claims that, “We challenge ourselves to best utilize our assets, expertise and influence to make our communities stronger and our world more sustainable, while governing our activities as a good corporate citizen in compliance with all regulatory requirements and with a belief that doing ‘the right thing’ serves everyone.”<sup>152</sup> Defendant Cardinal likewise claims to “lead [its] industry in anti-diversion strategies to help prevent opioids from being diverted for misuse or abuse.” Along the same lines, it claims to “maintain a sophisticated, state-of-the-art program to identify, block and report to regulators those orders of prescription controlled medications that do not meet [its] strict criteria.”<sup>153</sup> Defendant Cardinal also promotes funding it provides for “Generation Rx,” which funds grants related to prescription drug misuse.

288. Along the same lines, Defendant McKesson publicly claims that its “customized analytics solutions track pharmaceutical product storage, handling and dispensing in real time at every step of the supply chain process,” creating the impression that McKesson uses this tracking to help prevent diversion.<sup>154</sup> Its website offers assurances that the company’s Controlled Substances Monitoring Program (“CSMP”) “uses sophisticated algorithms designed to monitor for suspicious orders, and block the shipment of controlled substances.”<sup>155</sup> Defendant McKesson has also publicly stated that it has a “best-in-class controlled substance monitoring program to help identify suspicious orders,” and claimed it is “deeply passionate about curbing the opioid

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<sup>152</sup> <http://www.cardinalhealth.com/en/about-us/corporate-citizenship/ethics-and-governance.html>

<sup>153</sup> <http://cardinalhealth.mediaroom.com/valuestatement>

<sup>154</sup> McKesson website, Pharmaceutical Distribution for Manufacturers, available at <http://www.mckesson.com/manufacturers/pharmaceutical-distribution/>

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.mckesson.com/about-mckesson/fighting-opioid-abuse/pharmaceutical-supply-chain/>

epidemic in our country.”<sup>156</sup>

289. These public statements created the false and misleading impression that the Distributer Defendants rigorously carried out their duty to report suspicious orders and exercise due diligence to prevent diversion of these dangerous drugs, and worked voluntarily to prevent diversion as a matter of corporate responsibility to the communities their business practices would necessarily impact.

290. Purdue deceptively and unfairly failed to report to authorities illicit or suspicious prescribing of its opioids, even as it has publicly and repeatedly touted its “constructive role in the fight against opioid abuse,” including its commitment to ADF opioids and its “strong record of coordination with law enforcement.”<sup>157</sup>

291. As described in Section IV.A, Purdue’s public stance long has been that “bad apple” patients and drug diversion to illicit secondary channels—and not widespread prescribing of OxyContin and other opioids for chronic pain—are to blame for widespread addiction and abuse. To address the problems of illicit use and diversion, Purdue promotes its funding of various drug abuse and diversion prevention programs and introduction of ADF opioids. This allows Purdue to present itself as a responsible corporate citizen while continuing to profit from the commonplace prescribing of its drugs, even at high doses for long-term use.

292. At the heart of Purdue’s public outreach is the claim that it works hand-in-glove

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<sup>156</sup> Scott Higham et al., *Drug Industry Hired Dozens of Officials from the DEA as the Agency Tried to Curb Opioid Abuse*, Wash. Post, Dec. 22, 2016, available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/key-officials-switch-sides-from-dea-to-pharmaceutical-industry/2016/12/22/55d2e938-c07b-11e6-b527-949c5893595e\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/key-officials-switch-sides-from-dea-to-pharmaceutical-industry/2016/12/22/55d2e938-c07b-11e6-b527-949c5893595e_story.html).

<sup>157</sup> Purdue, *Setting The Record Straight On OxyContin’s FDA-Approved Label*, May 5, 2016, <http://www.purduepharma.com/news-media/get-the-facts/setting-the-record-straight-on-oxycontin-fda-approved-label/>; Purdue, *Setting The Record Straight On Our Anti-Diversion Programs*, July 11, 2016, <http://www.purduepharma.com/news-media/get-the-facts/setting-the-record-straight-on-our-anti-diversion-programs/>.

with law enforcement and government agencies to combat opioid abuse and diversion. Purdue has consistently trumpeted this partnership since at least 2008, and the message of close cooperation in virtually all of Purdue's recent pronouncements in response to the opioid abuse.

293. Touting the benefits of ADF opioids, Purdue's website posits: "we are acutely aware of the public health risks these powerful medications create ... That's why we work with health experts, law enforcement, and government agencies on efforts to reduce the risks of opioid abuse and misuse ..."<sup>158</sup> Purdue's statement on "Opioids Corporate Responsibility" likewise states that "[f]or many years, Purdue has committed substantial resources to combat opioid abuse by partnering with ... communities, law enforcement, and government."<sup>159</sup> And, responding to criticism of Purdue's failure to report suspicious prescribing to government regulatory and enforcement authorities, the website similarly proclaims that Purdue "ha[s] a long record of close coordination with the DEA and other law enforcement stakeholders to detect and reduce drug diversion."<sup>160</sup>

294. These public pronouncements create the misimpression that Purdue is proactively working with law enforcement and government authorities nationwide to root out drug diversion, including the illicit prescribing that can lead to diversion. It aims to distance Purdue from its past conduct in deceptively marketing opioids and make its current marketing seem more

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<sup>158</sup> Purdue website, *Opioids With Abuse-Deterrent Properties*, <http://www.purduepharma.com/healthcare-professionals/responsible-use-of-opioids/opioids-with-abuse-deterrent-properties/>.

<sup>159</sup> Purdue website, *Opioids Corporate Responsibility*, <http://www.purduepharma.com/news-media/opioids-corporate-responsibility/>.

<sup>160</sup> Purdue, *Setting The Record Straight On Our Anti-Diversion Programs*, July 11, 2016, <http://www.purduepharma.com/news-media/get-the-facts/setting-the-record-straight-on-our-anti-diversion-programs/>. Contrary to its public statements, Purdue worked behind the scenes to push back against law enforcement. (we should keep this sentence only if they did – either they did or they didn't)

trustworthy and truthful.

295. Nevertheless, Purdue, despite making numerous detail visits to suspicious prescribers, did not report items of concern. Purdue visited Jerrold Rosenberg more than 300 times and, upon information and belief, did not report him. Furthermore, as discussed above, Purdue continued to detail one prescriber, Bartel Crisafi, 20 more times after he entered into a consent agreement regarding excessive opioid prescribing. Another prescriber, Dennis Moonan, was disciplined for failing to maintain sufficient safeguards against diversion on July 9, 2014, including a bar on taking on any new patients other than hospice patients who might require opioids. Purdue detailed him an additional 48 times since that time, including on one occasion in 2015 when his secretary told the representative they “use a lot of OxyContin.”

296. Mallinckrodt, in addition to lacking an adequate system to detect suspicious orders, Mallinckrodt claims on its website to be “committed both to helping health care providers treat patients in pain and to fighting opioid misuse and abuse,” and further asserts that: “In key areas, our initiatives go beyond what is required by law. We address diversion and abuse through a multidimensional approach that includes educational efforts, monitoring for suspicious orders of controlled substances . . .”<sup>161</sup>

297. These public statements create the false and misleading impression that Mallinckrodt has rigorously carried out its duty to report suspicious orders and to exercise due diligence to prevent diversion of these dangerous drugs, and also worked voluntarily to prevent diversion as a matter of corporate responsibility. The truth, of course, is that Mallinckrodt failed to put in place appropriate procedures to ensure suspicious orders would be reported and instead,

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<sup>161</sup> Mallinckrodt website, Our Programs, [http://www2.mallinckrodt.com/Responsibility/Responsible\\_Use/Our\\_Programs/](http://www2.mallinckrodt.com/Responsibility/Responsible_Use/Our_Programs/)



continued to fill suspicious orders and supplied far more opioids than were justified and led to diversion of opioids in Rhode Island and other states. Furthermore, far from trying to address diversion, Mallinckrodt worked to defeat programs and laws designed to prevent diversion through its sponsorship of APA and USPF.

**IX. BY INCREASING OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS AND USE, DEFENDANTS COLLECTIVELY FUELED THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC AND CREATED A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS SIGNIFICANTLY HARMING RHODE ISLAND AND ITS CITIZENS**

298. The deceptive conduct of the Manufacturing Defendants prompted Rhode Island's health care providers to prescribe, patients to take, and, upon information and belief, payors to cover high volumes of opioids for the treatment of chronic pain. Distributor Defendants ensured Rhode Island pharmacies were stocked with opioids. Defendants expanded the prescription opioid market significantly, thereby causing addiction and harm to public health and safety. Purdue itself acknowledged the link between increased opioid prescribing and opioid abuse and diversion; the company's senior medical officials acknowledged in a 2006 in a paper they co-authored, "non-medical use of opioids is a predictable parallel phenomenon of their prescriptive availability and that the extent of diversion is well predicted by the relative potency of the drug and the amount in prescriptive use."<sup>162</sup> While Defendants reaped enormous profits from their scheme, state agencies and most importantly the public has suffered and continues to suffer the consequences of the opioid epidemic they created.

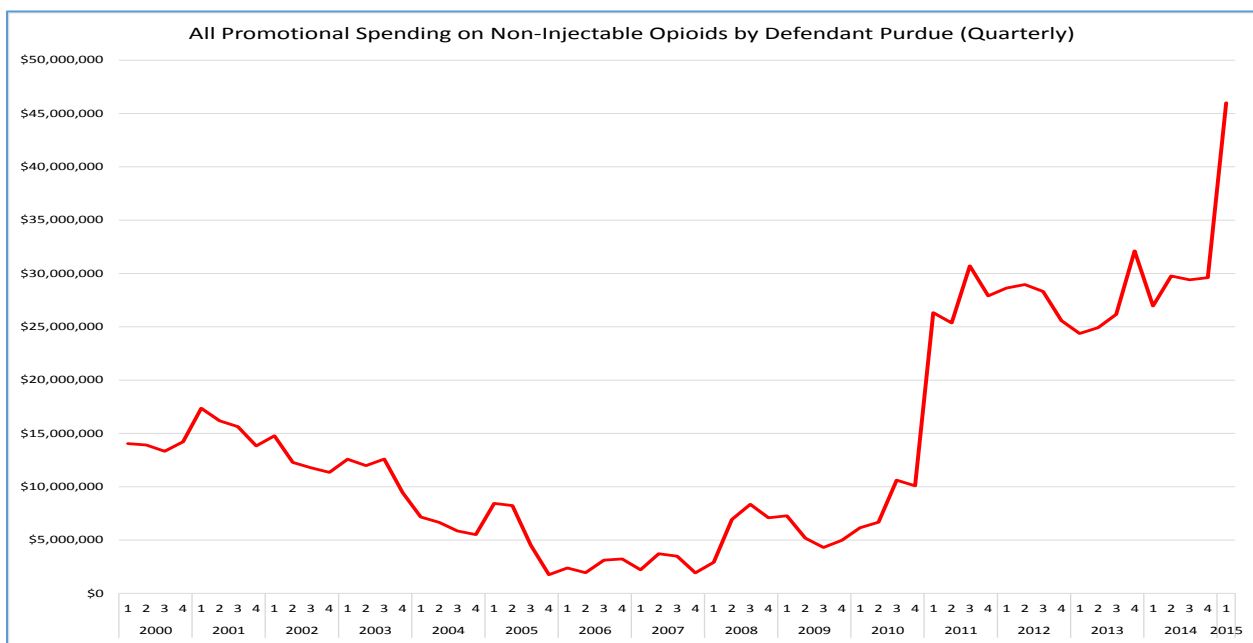
299. Through its early marketing, Purdue overcame barriers to widespread prescribing of opioids for chronic pain with deceptive messages about the risks and benefits of long-term opioid use. Through their continued deceptive conduct, including to the present, Purdue and

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<sup>162</sup> Nabarun Dasgupta, E. Douglas Kramer, Mary-Ann Zalman, Salvatore Carino Jr., Meredith Y. Smith, J. David Haddox, and Curtis Wright IV, "Association between non-medical and prescriptive usage of opioids. *Drug & Alcohol Dependence*, 82(2), 135-142.

Insys have both benefited from and extended their prior misrepresentations, sustaining and expanding a market for their opioids. Distributor Defendants compounded these harms by supplying opioids beyond even what this expanded market could bear, funneling so many opioids into the state that they could only have been delivering opioids for diversion and illicit use. The opioids that were prescribed, distributed, and used throughout Rhode Island as a result of Defendants’ wrongful conduct have devastated Rhode Island and its residents.

300. Purdue deceptive conduct substantially contributed to an explosion in the use of

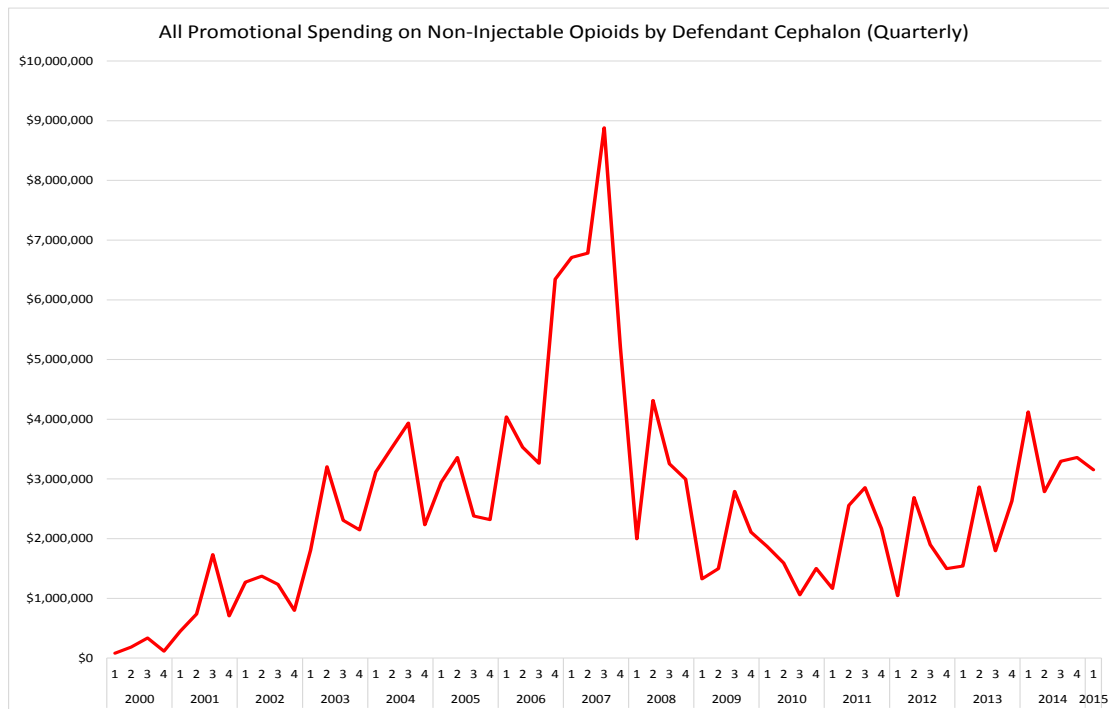


opioids across the country. Approximately 20% of the population between the ages of 30 and 44, and nearly 30% of the population over 45, have used opioids. Opioids are the most common treatment for chronic pain, and 20% of office visits now include the prescription of an opioid.

301. Purdue spent roughly \$15 million per quarter in 2000 on marketing. Its promotional spending decreased from 2000 to 2007, as the company came under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice and various state attorneys general. But by 2010, with the introduction of Butrans and reformulated OxyContin, Purdue ramped up its marketing once again. In 2011, Purdue’s marketing spiked to more than \$25 million per quarter, and by the end

of 2015, with the introduction of Hysingla ER, it soared to more than \$40 million per quarter.

302. Teva’s quarterly promotional spending steadily climbed from below \$1 million in 2000 to more than \$3 million in 2014 (and more than \$13 million for the year), with a peak, coinciding with the launch of Fentora, of nearly \$9 million for one quarter of 2007 (and more than \$27 million for the year), as shown below:



303. Within Rhode Island, from 2006 through 2017, Purdue made over 42,000 visits to over 1,500 different prescribers, some over 300 times. Insys also spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on promotion in Rhode Island, including direct inducements to one prescriber, Dr. Rosenberg, to prescribe its drug, as discussed, *supra*. Teva and Mallinckrodt promoted opioids in Rhode Island as well, though less extensively.

304. Numerous prescribers who participated in Rhode Island’s Medical Assistance Programs wrote prescriptions as a result of hearing misrepresentations from Purdue or Insys.

The following examples of prescribers' are representative claims reimbursed by the Medical Assistance Program following the receipt of misrepresentations:

- a. Rhode Island Prescriber A, an internist in Pawtucket, received misrepresentations relating to pseudoaddiction from a sales representative on February 4, 2009. Rhode Island Prescriber A subsequently wrote 10 prescriptions for OxyContin resulting in \$2,173.34 in charges to the Medical Assistance Program.
- b. Rhode Island Prescriber B, a urologist in Wakefield, received materials from a Purdue sales representative containing misrepresentations about pseudoaddiction on February 13, 2009. Rhode Island Prescriber B subsequently wrote 7 prescriptions for OxyContin resulting in \$4,253.76 in charges to the Medical Assistance Program.
- c. Rhode Island Prescriber C, an internist in Smithfield, received misrepresentations from a Purdue sales representative concerning the superiority of long acting opioids in July 2007. Rhode Island Prescriber C subsequently wrote 88 prescriptions for OxyContin resulting in \$66,402.32 in charges to the Medical Assistance Program.
- d. Rhode Island Prescriber D, a neurologist in Woonsocket, received misrepresentations from Purdue sales representatives concerning the efficacy of its abuse-deterrent opioids. Rhode Island Prescriber D subsequently wrote 13 prescriptions for OxyContin resulting in \$3,766.55 in charges to the Medical Assistance Program.
- e. Rhode Island Prescriber E, an orthopedist in Cranston, received misrepresentations from Purdue sales representatives concerning the efficacy of its abuse-deterrent opioids. Rhode Island Prescriber D subsequently wrote 2 prescriptions for OxyContin resulting in \$247.79 in charges to the Medical Assistance Program.

305. As a result of this marketing, overall sales of opioids in Rhode Island have also skyrocketed. From 2007 through 2018, Purdue Schedule II and III opioid drugs cost the Rhode Island Medical Assistance Program \$7,236,034.95, representing 19,263 unique prescriptions. Rhode Island's Medical Assistance Program spent \$194,685.30 for 27 Subsys prescriptions from May 23, 2014 through March 4, 2016; \$176,658.78 of these prescriptions were written by Dr. Rosenberg. These figures do not include the additional expenses paid by the State's employee health plan and workers compensation programs, private third-party payors, and consumers.

306. Government experts have recognized the relationship between the marketing of opioids and increased prescribing and use. Representing the NIH’s National Institute of Drug Abuse in hearings before the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control in May 2014, Dr. Nora Volkow explained that “aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies” is “likely to have contributed to the severity of the current prescription drug abuse problem.”<sup>163</sup>

307. In August 2016, then U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy published an open letter to physicians nationwide, enlisting their help in combating this “urgent health crisis” and linking that crisis to deceptive marketing. He wrote that the push to aggressively treat pain, and the “devastating” results that followed, had “coincided with heavy marketing to doctors ... [m]any of [whom] were even taught—incorrectly—that opioids are not addictive when prescribed for legitimate pain.”<sup>164</sup>

308. Scientific evidence demonstrates a close link between opioid prescriptions and opioid abuse. For example, a 2007 study found “a very strong correlation between therapeutic exposure to opioid analgesics, as measured by prescriptions filled, and their abuse,”<sup>165</sup> with particularly compelling data for extended release oxycodone—*i.e.*, OxyContin.

309. There is a “parallel relationship between the availability of prescription opioid analgesics through legitimate pharmacy channels and the diversion and abuse of these drugs and associated adverse outcomes.”<sup>166</sup> The opioid epidemic is “directly related to the increasingly

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<sup>163</sup> “America’s Addiction to Opioids: Heroin and Prescription Drug Abuse,” *Senate Caucus on Int’l Narcotics Control*, hr’g, Testimony of Dr. Nora Volkow (May 14, 2014) <http://www.drugcaucus.senate.gov/sites/default/files/Volkow%20Testimony.pdf>.

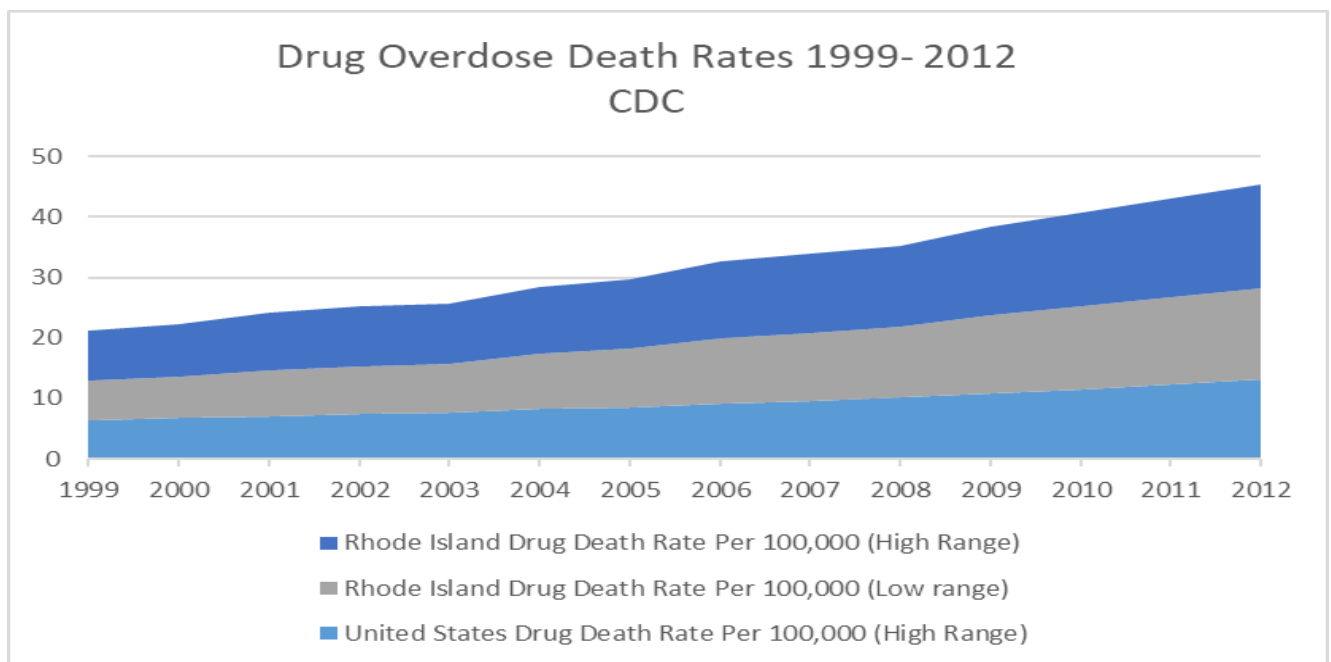
<sup>164</sup> See n.8, *supra*.

<sup>165</sup> Theodore J Cicero *et al.*, *Relationship Between Therapeutic Use and Abuse of Opioid Analgesics in Rural, Suburban, and Urban Locations in the United States*, 16.8 *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety*, 827-40 (2007).

<sup>166</sup> Dart, MD, et al., Trends in Opioid Analgesic Abuse and Mortality in the United States, *New Engl. J. Med.*, 372:241-248 (January 15, 2015).

widespread misuse of powerful opioid pain medications.”<sup>167</sup>

310. As of 2014, in Rhode Island, almost 5% of the population self-reported using opioids non-medically, exceeding the national average. The percent of the population reporting drug dependence also exceeded the national average, with 3.5% of the State’s residents acknowledging a substance abuse order, versus 2.7% nationwide.<sup>168</sup> Analysis of private insurance claims shows that Rhode Island was one of the five states with the greatest proportion of opioid abuse and dependence claims to total medical claims in the nation.<sup>169</sup> This coincides with the fact that, from 2006 through 2013, Rhode Island’s per capita prescribing also exceeded the national average.



311. In a 2016 report, the CDC explained that “[o]pioid pain reliever prescribing has

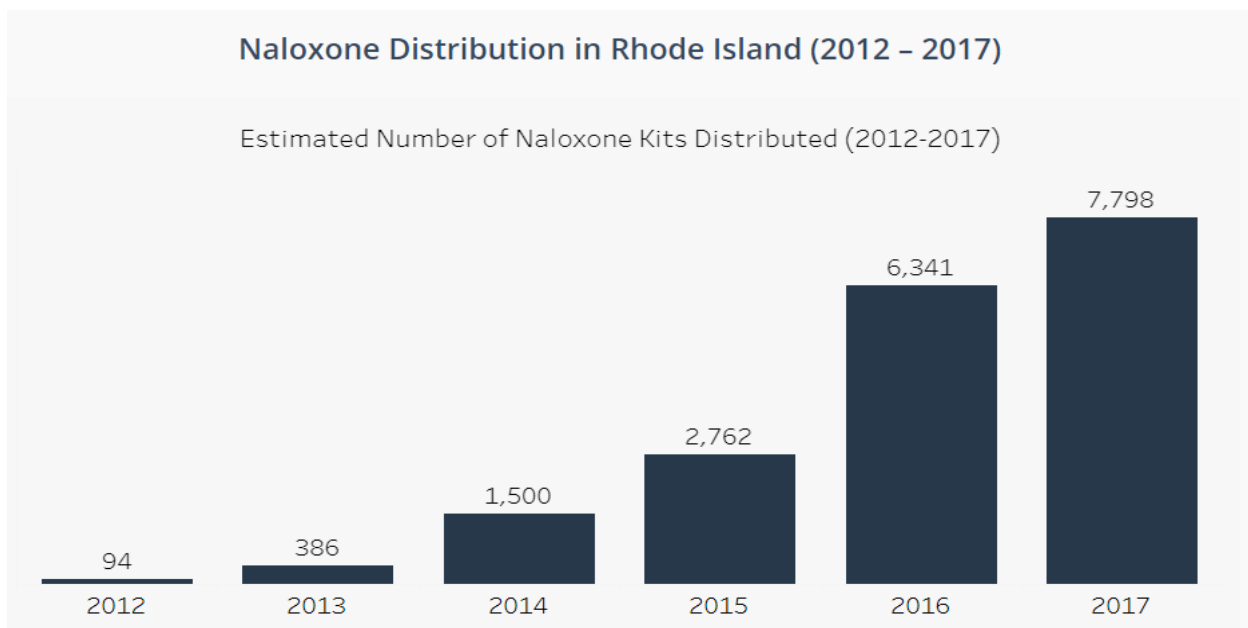
<sup>167</sup> Califf, MD, et al., A Proactive Response to Prescription Opioid Abuse, New Engl. J. Med. (April 14, 2016).

<sup>168</sup> <http://opioid.amfar.org/RI>

<sup>169</sup> Alessandra Malito, *The unfortunate thing West Virginia, California and Rhode Island have in common*, Marketwatch (Oct. 1, 2018), [https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-unfortunate-thing-west-virginia-california-and-rhode-island-have-in-common-2018-10-01?link=MW\\_latest\\_news](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-unfortunate-thing-west-virginia-california-and-rhode-island-have-in-common-2018-10-01?link=MW_latest_news)

quadrupled since 1999 and has increased in parallel with [opioid] overdoses.” Patients receiving opioid prescriptions for chronic pain account for the majority of overdoses. For these reasons, the CDC concluded that efforts to rein in the prescribing of opioids for chronic pain are critical “to reverse the epidemic of opioid drug overdose deaths and prevent opioid-related morbidity.”<sup>170</sup>

312. In connection with increases in overdoses and prescription, Rhode Island has drastically increased the numbers of naloxone kits to members of the population at risk, including to opioid users, their kin, and community organizations. Distribution of these kits went from 94 in 2012 to 7,798 in 2017, an increase of more than 8,000%, as set forth below:<sup>171</sup>



313. By continuing to fill and failing to report suspicious orders of opioids, Defendant Distributors have enabled an oversupply of opioids, which allows non-patients to become

<sup>170</sup> CDC, January 1, 2016 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report; Rudd, Rose A., *et al.* "Increases in drug and opioid overdose deaths—United States, 2000–2014." *American Journal of Transplantation* 16.4 (2016): 1323-1327.

<sup>171</sup> <http://preventoverdoseri.org/naloxone-data/>

exposed to opioids, and facilitates access to opioids for both patients who could no longer access or afford prescription opioids and addicts struggling with relapse. Distributor Defendants had financial incentives to distribute higher volumes and not to report suspicious orders or guard against diversion. Wholesale drug distributors acquire pharmaceuticals, including opioids, from manufacturers at an established wholesale acquisition cost. Discounts and rebates from this cost may be offered by manufacturers based on market share and volume. As a result, higher volumes may decrease the cost per pill to distributors. Decreased cost per pill in turn, allows wholesale distributors to offer more competitive prices, or alternatively, pocket the difference as additional profit. Either way, the increased sales volumes result in a demand for opioids causing addiction, a widening demand with an increase in profits, and devastating consequences.<sup>172</sup>

314. “The prescription opioid epidemic and the heroin epidemics are intertwined.”<sup>173</sup> Opioids were involved in 42% of all fatal drug overdoses in 2015, and another 25% involved heroin. According to the CDC, between 1999 and 2015, more than 194,000 people died in the United States from prescription-related overdoses. In Rhode Island, annual accidental drug overdoses ranged increased from 111 in 2011 to 336 in 2016. Since 2016, over 60% of drug overdose deaths in Rhode Island have involved fentanyl.

315. Overdose deaths are only one consequence. Opioid addiction and misuse also result in an increase in emergency room visits, emergency responses, and emergency medical technicians’ administration of Naloxone—the antidote to opioid overdose.

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<sup>172</sup> The Kaiser Family Fund, *Follow the Pill: Understanding the U.S. Commercial Pharmaceutical Supply Chain* (2005), available at <https://www.kff.org/other/report/follow-the-pill-understanding-the-u-s/>

<sup>173</sup> National Academy of Sciences, *Pain Management and The Opioid Epidemic, Balancing Societal and Individual Benefits and Risks of Prescription Opioid Use*, Bonnie, Ford, Phillips, et al., Washington D.C. (2017) at 217.



316. Rising opioid use and abuse have negative social and economic consequences far beyond overdoses. According to a recent analysis by a Princeton University economist, approximately one out of every three working age men who are not in the labor force take daily prescription pain medication. The same research finds that opioid prescribing alone accounts for 20% of the overall decline in the labor force participation for this group from 2014-16, and 25% of the smaller decline in labor force participation among women. Many of those taking painkillers still said they experienced pain daily.

317. The use of opioids has caused Rhode Island residents to develop addiction and required treatment often paid for by the State through its Medical Assistance Program and employee health insurance program. Between 2013 and 2016, the Medical Assistance Program's spending on Suboxone, a drug that treats opioid addiction, more than doubled—from \$2.7 million to \$6.3 million. Rhode Island's Medical Assistance Program also spent an additional \$100,000 on Vivitrol, another opioid addiction drug.

318. Overprescribing and oversupply of opioids has also caused increases in inpatient substance abuse treatment utilization. In 2015, Rhode Island had more than 100 more inpatient stays per 100,000 people compared with the national average. However, four out of every five Rhode Islanders who needed treatment as of 2014 were not receiving it.<sup>174</sup>

319. Since 2017, Rhode Island has spent over \$2 million per year to provide medication assisted opioid addiction treatment (“MAT”) for incarcerated addicts.

320. There are additional costs from the growing universe of medications aimed at treating other secondary effects of opioids—including not only addiction and overdose, but also other side effects like constipation and sedation. According to a recent analysis by *The*

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<sup>174</sup> See: <http://opioid.amfar.org/RI>

*Washington Post*, working age women and men on opioids are much more likely to have four or more prescriptions from a physician (57% and 41%, respectively) than their counterparts who do not take opioids (14% and 9%, respectively). These secondary-effects medications—essentially, drugs to treat the effects of opioids—generated at least \$4.6 billion in spending nationally in 2015, on top of \$9.57 billion in spending on opioids themselves. One of the most worrisome effects of opioids has been the spread of Hepatitis C, a serious virus that attacks the kidneys, is transmitted through the sharing of needles used to inject opioids (among other drugs used intravenously). Rhode Island’s Medical Assistance Program also spent \$18 million on drugs to treat Hepatitis C, including infections, upon information and belief, transmitted through the injection of opioids. In addition, the State has borne the costs of dispensing opioids—in office visits to obtain refills, count pills, or obtain toxicology screens to monitor potential abuse.

321. The deceptive marketing and overprescribing of opioids also had a significant detrimental impact on children. Prescription opioid use before high school graduation is related to a 33% increase in the risk of later opioid misuse, and adolescent misuse of opioid medications greatly predicts the later use of heroin.<sup>175</sup> However, according to the CDC Guideline, there has been a significant increase in prescribing of opioids to adolescents and children for headaches and injuries.

322. Even infants have not been immune to the impact of opioid abuse. There has been a dramatic rise in the number of infants who are born addicted to opioids due to prenatal exposure and suffer from neonatal abstinence syndrome (“NAS,” also known as neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, or “NOWS”). These infants painfully withdraw from the drug once they are born, cry nonstop from the pain and stress, experience convulsions or tremors, have difficulty

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<sup>175</sup> CDC Guideline at 3.

sleeping and feeding, and suffer from diarrhea, vomiting, and low weight gain, among other serious symptoms. The long-term developmental effects are still unknown, though research in other states has indicated that these children are likely to suffer from continued, serious neurologic and cognitive impacts, including hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, lack of impulse control, and a higher risk of future addiction. When untreated, NAS can be life-threatening. In 2009, more than 13,000 infants in the United States were born with NAS, or about one every hour. In Rhode Island, the incidence of NAS increased from 2.8 cases per 1,000 in 2002 to 7.3 cases per 1,000 in 2012.

323. Defendants' conduct has also significantly harmed veterans. Sixty percent (60%) of veterans returning from deployment suffer from chronic pain, double the national average of thirty percent (30%) of U.S. citizens. Veterans are twice as likely to suffer addiction, and to die from opioid abuse than non-veterans according to a 2011 Veterans Administration study.

324. Defendants' success in expanding the market for opioids to new patients and chronic conditions also created an abundance of drugs available for non-medical or illicit use and fueled a new wave of addiction, abuse, and injury.

325. Contrary to Defendants' misrepresentations, most of the illicit use originates from *prescribed* opioids. It has been estimated that 60% of the opioids that are abused come, directly or indirectly, through physicians' prescriptions. In 2011, 71% of people who abused prescription opioids got them through friends or relatives, not from drug dealers or the internet. Upon information and belief, a majority of their patients treated for heroin started their addiction with prescription opioids and then migrated to heroin.

326. In fact, people who are addicted to prescription opioid painkillers are 40 times

more likely to become addicted to heroin.<sup>176</sup> Further, 80% of current heroin users began with prescription opioids.<sup>177</sup> The CDC identified addiction to prescription pain medication as the strongest risk factor for heroin addiction.<sup>178</sup> A recent, even more deadly problem stemming from the prescription opioid epidemic involves fentanyl—a powerful opioid carefully prescribed for cancer pain or in hospital settings that, in synthetic form, has made its way into Rhode Island’s communities. The rise of fentanyl has particularly affected Rhode Island, where it appeared in more than *half* of all fatal overdoses in 2016.

#### **X. DEFENDANTS FRADULENTLY CONCEALED THEIR MISCONDUCT**

327. Defendants, promoted, and profited from their misrepresentations about the risks and benefits of opioids for chronic pain even though they knew that their marketing was false and misleading. The history of opioids, as well as research and clinical experience over the last 20 years, established that prescription opioids were highly addictive and responsible for a long list of very serious adverse outcomes. The FDA and other regulators warned Manufacturing Defendants of this, and likewise, Purdue paid hundreds of millions of dollars to address similar misconduct that occurred before 2008. Manufacturing Defendants had access to scientific studies, detailed prescription data, and reports of adverse events, including reports of addiction, hospitalization, and deaths—all of which made clear the harms from long-term opioid use and that patients are suffering from addiction, overdoses, and death in alarming numbers. More recently, the FDA and CDC have issued pronouncements based on existing medical

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<sup>176</sup> CDC Press Release, *New Research Reveals the Trends and Risk Factors Behind America’s Growing Heroin Epidemic*, (July 7, 2015)

<sup>177</sup> National Academy of Sciences, *Pain Management and The Opioid Epidemic, Balancing Societal and Individual Benefits and Risks of Prescription Opioid Use*, Bonnie, Ford, Phillips, et al., Washington D.C. (2017) at 189.

<sup>178</sup> CDC, *Today’s Heroin Epidemic*, Vital Signs (available at <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2015/p0707-heroin-epidemic.html>).

evidence that conclusively expose the known falsity of these Defendants’ misrepresentations.

328. Notwithstanding this knowledge, at all times relevant to this Amended Complaint, Manufacturing Defendants took steps to avoid detection of and to fraudulently conceal their deceptive marketing and unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent conduct. They disguised their own role in the deceptive marketing of chronic opioid therapy by funding and working through biased science, unbranded marketing, third-party advocates, and professional associations. Purdue hid behind the assumed credibility of these sources and relied on them to establish the accuracy and integrity of Defendants’ false and misleading messages about the risks and benefits of long-term opioid use for chronic pain. Purdue masked or never disclosed their role in shaping, editing, and approving the content of this information. Defendants also distorted the meaning or import of studies it cited and offered them as evidence for propositions the studies did not support. Insys likewise held itself out as a legitimate pharmaceutical company by purporting to hold speaker events in Rhode Island that were in reality shams to induce or reward a specific doctor for continuing to prescribe an addictive drug, including to inappropriate patients who did not benefit from the treatment.

329. Teva fraudulently concealed its conduct by using CME programs as a vehicle for off-label marketing, masking the product-specific promotion of its opioids for chronic pain, even though the “class” of drugs to which its CME pertained could only apply to TIRF drugs.

330. Mallinckrodt, too, disguised its role in the deceptive marketing of chronic opioid therapy by funding and working through unbranded marketing and front groups. In addition, Mallinckrodt affirmatively assured the public, and state and local governments, that it was working to prevent diversion and to curb opioid use and abuse. Yet, it failed to prevent diversion and worked behind the scenes through front groups to undermine programs and statutes designed

to combat the epidemic.

331. Manufacturing Defendants thus successfully concealed from the medical community, patients, and the State facts sufficient to arouse suspicion of the claims that Rhode Island now maintains. Rhode Island did not know of the existence or scope of these Defendants' activities and could not have acquired such knowledge earlier through the exercise of reasonable diligence.

332. Distributor Defendants also fraudulently concealed their misconduct. They have declined to release the ARCOS data which provides detailed tracking information about their shipments. In addition, as explained above, these Defendants publicly portray themselves as maintaining sophisticated technology as part of a concerted effort to thwart diversion, and publicly portray themselves as committed to fighting the opioid epidemic, while failing to meet their obligations to report suspicious orders and prevent diversion. Rhode Island did not know of the existence or scope of the Distributor Defendants' misconduct and could not have acquired such knowledge earlier through the exercise of reasonable diligence.

333. As a result of Defendants' efforts to conceal their misconduct, any statutes of limitation otherwise applicable to any claims asserted herein against all Defendants have been tolled by the discovery rule.

## **XI. CAUSES OF ACTION**

### **COUNT I: PUBLIC NUISANCE AGAINST THE PURDUE DEFENDANTS, MALLINCKRODT, TEVA, AND DISTRIBUTOR DEFENDANTS**

334. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

335. A public nuisance is an unreasonable interference with a right common to the general public, such as behavior that unreasonably interferes with the health, safety, peace,

comfort or convenience of the general community.

336. Put another way, a public nuisance has been defined as an act or omission which obstructs or causes inconvenience or damage to the public in the exercise of rights common to all.

337. As the Restatement (Second) of Torts explains, “[c]ircumstances that may sustain a holding that an interference with a public right is unreasonable include . . . [w]hether the conduct involves a significant interference with the public health, public safety, the public peace, or the public convenience.” *Id.* § 821B at 87.

338. A person or people with control over the instrumentality alleged to have created the nuisance when the damage occurred may be liable for a public nuisance. In other words, one who controls a public nuisance is liable for damages caused by that nuisance.

339. Activities that interfere with a public right, if carried out in violation of state laws or local ordinances, generally have been considered unreasonable interferences.

340. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants’ conduct, as described in this Amended Complaint, unreasonably interferes with a public right, including the health, safety, peace, comfort or convenience of the general community.

341. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants’ acts and omissions obstruct or cause inconvenience or damage to the public in the exercise of rights common to all.

342. The public nuisance the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva and the Distributor Defendants created and maintained is one that injures the citizens generally who are so circumscribed as to come within its influence.

343. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva and the Distributor Defendants knew

and should have known that its promotion of opioids was false and misleading and that their deceptive marketing scheme and other unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent actions would create or assist in the creation of a public nuisance.

344. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants knew and should have known that their failure to comply with their statutory and common law duties to maintain effective controls against diversion, including by reporting and exercising due diligence not to fill suspicious orders, would create or assist in the creation or maintenance of a public nuisance.

345. By failing to maintain effective controls against diversion from the closed - system, including by expanding the market for prescription opioids and failing to report and stop shipment of suspicious orders, the Distributor Defendants, the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva knowingly exacerbated the opioid crisis in Rhode Island and failed to limit its reach.

346. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants engaged in conduct proscribed by statute, ordinance or administrative regulation, as described in this Amended Complaint, including violations of the State False Claims Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-1 *et seq.*; the Rhode Island Controlled Substances Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 21-28-1.01, *et seq.*, and Administrative Code Section 216—RI ADC 20-20-4.7, which require that manufacturers and distributors maintain “effective controls against diversion of controlled substances into other than legitimate medical, scientific, or industrial channels” and comply with “applicable federal, state, and local law,” which also includes the mandates of the Federal Controlled Substances Act set forth in 21 U.S.C. § 823 and 21 C.F.R. 1301.74(b). *See* R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.03 and 3.04.

347. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants



willingly participated to a substantial extent in creating and maintaining the public nuisance. Without each Defendants' actions, opioid use, misuse, abuse, and addiction would not have become so widespread, and the opioid epidemic that now exists would have been averted or much less severe.

348. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva and the Distributor Defendants had control over their acts and omissions, the instrumentalities causing the public nuisance, at the time the damage occurred. Purdue was in control of the "instrumentality" of the nuisance, namely the process of marketing and the creation and maintenance of the increase in the demand for prescription opioids at all relevant times, which included control of the misleading representations they conveyed through branded and unbranded marketing and product promotion resulting in the harm caused by the opioid epidemic.

349. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva controlled their deceptive marketing schemes and the instrumentalities they used to disseminate their messages and mislead the public, such as detailing by their sales representatives, online communications, publications, CME programs and other speaking events, and other means described in this Amended Complaint.

350. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva's actions in deceptively and unlawfully marketing opioids were, at the very least, a substantial factor in opioids becoming widely available and widely used and in the public health crisis that followed. Purdue and Insys perpetuated their deceptive advertising campaign and failed to correct their prior misstatements as the damage occurred and continues to occur. Purdue knew as early as 2006 that non-medical use of opioids could be predicted by their relative potency and availability.

351. Likewise, the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor

Defendants had control over their own shipments of opioids and over their reporting, or lack thereof, of suspicious prescribers and orders. Each of these Defendants controlled the systems they developed to control against diversion, including the criteria and process they used to identify red flags of suspicious orders or prescribing, whether and to what extent they trained their employees to report and exercise due diligence not to fill such orders or supply such prescribers, whether they intentionally manipulated their systems or ordering process to avoid reporting red flags or declining shipments, and whether they filled orders they knew would expand the use of addictive opioids and knew or should have known were likely to be diverted or fuel an illegal market they created resulting in the harm caused by the opioid epidemic.

352. Distributor Defendants, the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva were in control of the closed system for the creation and distribution of opioids, upon information and belief deliberately disregarded their duty to prevent diversion by failing to detect, report, and reject suspicious orders for opioids, causing opioids to be widely available for use, abuse, and misuse, fueling a secondary, criminal market for opioids, and magnifying their negative impact on law enforcement and causing harm to the public.

353. The public nuisance caused by prescription opioids is substantial and unreasonable interference with the public health, safety and welfare and has resulted in widespread opioid addiction, abuse, overdose, and death in the State of Rhode Island, with devastating impacts on residents and families, their communities, and government.

354. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants' conduct is unreasonable, and unlawful.

355. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants' conduct in creating and maintaining the public nuisance is ongoing and persistent.

356. Given the nature of opioids, the prior history of addiction and abuse, the importance of a closed system of distribution, and their own monitoring of the use and abuse of opioids, the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva and the Distributor Defendants' knew of the public health hazard their conduct would create and was creating in the State and across the country.

357. The public nuisance—i.e., the opioid epidemic—created, perpetuated, maintained and the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants' acts and omissions can be abated and further recurrence of such harm and inconvenience can be abated by (a) educating prescribers (especially primary care physicians and the most prolific prescribers) and patients regarding the true risks and benefits of opioids, including the risk of addiction, in order to prevent the next cycle of addiction; (b) providing addiction treatment to patients who are already addicted to opioids; (c) retrieving and disposing of excess opioids, eliminating a primary pathway of exposure for adolescents; (d) providing screening and treatment to pregnant women and newborns to reduce the incidence and impact of prenatal exposure; (e) making naloxone widely available so that overdoses are less frequently fatal; and (f) restraining the channels for diverting opioids by appropriately setting and enforcing customer limits, reporting suspicious orders, prescribers, and customers, and stopping, rather than simply delaying, the shipment of suspicious orders, among other measures. the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants' can act to abate the public nuisance, and in certain respects, the law recognizes that they are uniquely well positioned and required to do so.

358. The Purdue Defendants successfully mislead healthcare providers and patients alike, and changed the perception and practices regarding opioids. It is the manufacturer of a drug that has primary responsibility to assure the safety, efficacy, and appropriateness of a drug's

labeling, marketing, and promotion. This responsibility exists independent of any FDA regulation, to assure that its products and promotion meet both federal and state consumer protection laws and regulations. *Compare, e.g., Wyeth v. Levine*, 555 U.S. 555, 570–71 (2009) (explaining that “[t]hrough many amendments to the [Food Drug and Cosmetic Act] and to FDA regulations, it has remained a central premise of federal drug regulation that the manufacturer bears responsibility for the content of its label at all times” and “is charged both with crafting an adequate label and with ensuring that its warnings remain adequate as long as the drug is on the market”); *id.* at 578-79 & n. 11 (further stating that “state law actions” continue to “play a critical role in “uncover[ing] unknown drug hazards and provid[ing] incentives for drug manufacturers to disclose safety risks promptly”).

359. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva, and the Distributor Defendants are also uniquely well positioned to control and stop fueling, and to cut off at the source, diversion of prescription opioids. As registered manufacturers and distributors of controlled substances, Defendants are placed in a position of special trust and responsibility. Because of their direct relationship with customers in the supply chain, they are uniquely capable of determining whether a pharmacy is facilitating the diversion of prescription opioids. Because distributors both handle such large volumes of controlled substances, and are uniquely positioned, based on their knowledge of their customers and orders, as the first line of defense in the movement of legal pharmaceutical controlled substances from legitimate channels into the illicit market, their obligation to maintain effective controls to prevent diversion of controlled substances is critical. Manufacturers such as Purdue possessing detailed information about prescribing practices and ordering data purchased from opioid distributors are also positioned to act as a first line of defense.

360. The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva, and the Distributor Defendants' conduct directly and proximately caused injury to the State and its residents.

361. The State has been, and continues to be, injured by the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants' actions in creating a public nuisance.

**COUNT II:  
VIOLATIONS OF THE STATE FALSE CLAIMS ACT, R.I. GEN. LAWS § 9-1.1-1 ET  
SEQ  
AGAINST THE PURDUE DEFENDANTS AND INSYS**

362. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

363. R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-3(a) provides that [a]ny person who:

- (1) Knowingly presents, or causes to be presented a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval;
- (2) Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement material to a false or fraudulent claim;
- (3) Conspires to commit a violation of subdivisions § 9-1.1-3 (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) or (7); . . .
- (7) Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement material to an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the state, or knowingly conceals or knowingly and improperly avoids or decreases an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the state; is liable to the state for a civil penalty of not less than five thousand five hundred dollars (\$5,500) and not more than eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000), plus three (3) times the amount of damages which the state sustains because of the act of that person. A person violating this subsection (a) shall also be liable to the state for the costs of a civil action brought to recover any such penalty or damages.

364. R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-3(b)(2) defines a claim as:

any request or demand, whether under a contract or otherwise, for money or property and whether or not the state has title to the money or property, that: (i) Is presented to an officer, employee, or agent of the state; (ii) Is made to a contractor, grantee, or other recipient, if the money or property is to be spent or used on the state's behalf or advance a state program or interest, and if the state: (A) Provides or has provided any portion of the money or property requested or demanded; or (B) Will reimburse such contractor, grantee, or other recipient for any portion of the money or property which is requested or demanded[.]

365. The Purdue Defendants' practices, as described in this Amended Complaint,

violated the State False Claims Act. Purdue, through its deceptive marketing of opioids for chronic pain, presented or caused to be presented false or fraudulent claims and knowingly used or caused to be used a false statement to get a false or fraudulent claim for payment approved by the State.

366. Insys's practices, as described in this Amended Complaint, also violated the State False Claims Act. Insys, through its deceptive marketing of Subsys, kickback scheme, and involvement in misleading tactics to secure reimbursements, such as falsifying medical histories of patients, falsely claiming that patients had cancer, and providing misleading information to insurers and payors regarding patients' diagnoses and medical conditions, presented or caused to be presented false or fraudulent claims and knowingly used or caused to be used a false statement to get a false or fraudulent claim for payment approved by the State.

367. The Purdue Defendants and Insys knew that the doctors, pharmacists, other health care providers, and/or agents of the State Medical Assistance Program, and, upon information and belief, state-funded employee benefits plans to which they deceptively marketed prescription opioids had treated and would continue to treat Rhode Island Medical Assistance Patients.

368. The Purdue Defendants, knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded, at the time of making or disseminating these statements, or causing these statements to be made or disseminated, that such statements were untrue, false, or misleading and were made for the purpose of getting the State's Medical Assistance Program, and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, to pay for opioids for long-term treatment of chronic pain. In addition, The Purdue Defendants knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded, that its marketing and promotional efforts created an untrue, false, and misleading impression about the risks, benefits, and superiority of opioids for chronic pain.

369. Insys knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded, at the time of making or disseminating these statements, or causing these statements to be made or disseminated, that its statements were untrue, false, or misleading, that its kickback scheme was deceptive and illegal, and that it was involved in submitting misleading and fraudulent information regarding the use and/or approval of Subsys and patients being prescribed the drug. Insys made or disseminated these statements or engaged in these practices for the purpose of getting the State's Medical Assistance Program, and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, to pay for opioids for long-term treatment of chronic pain. In addition, Insys knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded, that its marketing and promotional efforts created an untrue, false, and misleading impression about the use of Subsys for treatment of non-cancer pain, particularly given the failure to disclose that Subsys was not approved for such use.

370. The Purdue Defendants and Insys knew their false statements were material to healthcare providers' decision to prescribe opioids to patients included in state-funded Medical Assistance Programs and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program. Indeed, Purdue and Insys intended such statements to be material to encourage additional opioid prescriptions. In addition, Insys knew its kickback scheme would be material to healthcare providers' decision to prescribe Subsys and that its concealment of this scheme and its false and deceptive statements regarding Subsys and involvement in the creation of fraudulent documents to secure reimbursements would be material to healthcare providers' decision to prescribe Subsys. Indeed, Insys intended such statements to be material to encourage additional Subsys prescriptions.

371. The Purdue Defendants' scheme caused doctors to write prescriptions for opioids to treat chronic pain that were presented to the State's Medical Assistance Program, and, upon

information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, for payment. Likewise, Insys's scheme caused doctors to write prescriptions for opioids to treat chronic pain that were presented to the State's Medical Assistance Program, and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, for payment.

372. The State's Medical Assistance Program only covers the cost of a prescription if it is medically necessary, and requires generic substitution unless stringent conditions, which also require medical necessity, are met, as determined by criteria set forth in RI ADC 39-12:1309.10, *amended by* 210-RI ADC 30-05.2.9 (2017). The State's employee health benefit program also only reimburses prescriptions that are medically-necessary.

373. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, other health care providers, and/or agents of the State Medical Assistance Program and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, expressly or impliedly certified to the State that opioids were medically necessary to treat chronic pain because they were influenced by the false and misleading statements disseminated by The Purdue Defendants, and Insys about the risks, benefits, and superiority of opioids for chronic pain.

374. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, other health care providers, and/or agents of the State Medical Assistance Program and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, expressly or impliedly certified to the State that Subsys was medically necessary because they were influenced by Insys's kickback scheme, deceptive marketing of Subsys, and/or scheme to supply false information regarding patients' medical history and conditions as a means of obtaining reimbursement.

375. The Purdue Defendants and Insys knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded that, as a natural consequence of their actions, the State would necessarily be paying



for long-term prescriptions of opioids to treat chronic pain, which were dispensed as a consequence of their fraud.

376. The Purdue Defendants' misrepresentations and omissions were material because the risks and benefits that Purdue distorted, including whether patients who used opioids for chronic pain were at risk of addiction and death, went to the heart of the decision to use and cover opioids. Medical Assistance Program

377. Alternatively, the misrepresentations were material because they would have a natural tendency to influence or be capable of influencing whether the costs of long-term prescriptions of opioids to treat chronic pain were paid by the State.

378. Insys knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded that, as a natural consequence of its actions, the State would necessarily be paying for Subsys prescriptions to treat non-cancer pain or to treat cancer pain for which less expensive generic opioids or other medications were available, which Subsys prescriptions were dispensed as a consequence of Insys's fraud.

379. Insys's misrepresentations and omissions were material because the unapproved, unsafe, and unsubstantiated promotion and use of Subsys for chronic pain, and Insys's pay-for-prescribing scheme went to the heart of the decision to use and cover opioids. Medical Assistance Program.

380. Alternatively, the misrepresentations were material because they would have a natural tendency to influence or be capable of influencing whether the costs of Subsys prescriptions were paid by the State.

381. By virtue of the above-described acts, Purdue and Insys knowingly made, used or caused to be made or used false records and statements, and omitted material facts, to induce the

State to approve and pay such false and fraudulent claims.

382. But for Purdue's and Insys's false statements and deceptive marketing schemes, the false claims at issue would not have been submitted for payment and would not have been paid by the State's Medical Assistance Program and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program.

383. The State, unaware of the falsity of the records, statements and claims made, used, or presented or caused to be made, used or presented by Purdue and Insys, paid claims that would not be paid but for The Purdue Defendants' and Insys's illegal business practices.

384. By reason of The Purdue Defendants' and Insys's unlawful acts, the State has been damaged, and continues to be damaged, in a substantial amount to be determined at trial. From January 19, 2007 through February 9, 2018 (the last date for which data are available), the State's Medical Assistance Program spent over \$6 million to pay for prescriptions of Purdue branded opioids, and additional funds for Purdue's generic opioids, and suffered additional damages for the costs of providing and using opioids long-term to treat chronic pain. From May 23, 2014 through March 4, 2016, the State's Medical Assistance Program spent over \$175 thousand to pay for prescriptions of Subsys.

385. The State Medical Assistance Program also spent over \$15 million over the last four years for medication assisted treatment—a number that will continue to grow.

386. Because the Purdue Defendants' unbranded marketing caused doctors to prescribe and the State to pay for long-term opioid treatment using opioids manufactured or distributed by other drug makers, Purdue caused and is responsible for those costs and claims as well.

387. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-3(a), the Purdue Defendants and Insys are liable for to pay three times the amount of damages sustained by the State for each violation of

the State False Claims Act. In addition, the Purdue Defendants' and Insys's statutory violations warrant the maximum amount of civil penalties allowed by law.

**COUNT III:  
FRAUD AND FRAUDULENT MISREPRESENTATION  
AGAINST DEFENDANTS THE PURDUE DEFENDANTS, INSYS, MALLINCKRODT,  
AND TEVA**

388. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

389. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva made false representations intending thereby to induce patients, healthcare providers, and the State to rely thereon. In addition, the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva intentionally failed to disclose material facts that they had a duty to disclose by virtue of these Defendants' other representations.

390. In overstating the benefits of and evidence for the use of opioids for chronic pain and understating their very serious risks, including the risk of addiction; in disseminating misleading information regarding the appropriateness of their opioids, and in falsely portraying their efforts or commitment to rein in the diversion and abuse of opioids, The Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva engaged in misrepresentations, deception, and knowing omissions of material fact. Purdue also engaged in misrepresentations, deception, and knowing omissions of material fact in falsely promoting abuse-deterrent formulations as reducing abuse, as well as in falsely claiming that OxyContin provides 12 hours of relief.

391. In addition, Insys, by deceptively promoting Subsys as safe and appropriate for uses such as neck and back pain, without disclosing the lack of approval or evidence for such uses, misrepresenting the appropriateness of Subsys for treating those conditions, and implementing a kickback scheme wherein it paid prescribers for sham speakers programs in exchange for prescribing Subsys and an insurance fraud scheme through which information

about patients was misrepresented, engaged in misrepresentations, deception, and knowing omissions of material fact.

392. Teva, by promoting Actiq and Fentora as safe and appropriate for uses such as neck and back pain, without disclosing the lack of approval or evidence for such uses, and misrepresenting the appropriateness of Actiq and Fentora for treating those conditions, engaged in misrepresentations, deception, and knowing omissions of material fact.

393. Specifically, misrepresentations or omissions include, but are not limited to, those set forth in Count II above.

394. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva knew at the time that they made their misrepresentations and omissions that they were false.

395. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva intended that the State and its prescribers, patients, and payors would rely on their misrepresentations and omissions, and that such reliance would cause the State to suffer loss.

396. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva's misrepresentations and omissions in this regard were made with the intention and effect of inducing the State to pay for or reimburse the costs of using opioids to treat chronic pain and to prescribe Subsys instead of other medications, with reckless disregard for the costs the State would incur as a direct and proximate result, including the costs of treating addiction and implementing programs to mitigate or reverse the public health epidemic.

397. The State justifiably relied on the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva's misrepresentations and omissions of material fact, to its damage.

398. The Purdue Defendants identified many prescribers engaged in suspicious prescribing of its opioids, but failed to report its suspicions, as required by law, and failed to stop

filling the prescriptions of prescribers it suspected of illegal activity with more drugs, while claiming to be activity working to curb the opioid epidemic.

399. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva knew, or should have known, that as an inevitable consequence of the conduct described herein, Rhode Island citizens would suffer opioid addiction, overdose, death, and associated economic and other loss, and the State would likewise suffer economic and other loss. Further, The Purdue Defendants and Mallinckrodt knew, or should have known, that its failure to report suspicious prescribing or stop the supply of its drugs to these providers has resulted in continued illicit prescribing of opioids by prescribers who could have been investigated and stopped.

400. In addition, the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva's false representations and concealments were reasonably calculated to deceive the State and health care providers who treated patients whose care was paid for or reimbursed by the State and the patients who received the care and the State in paying for or reimbursing that care.

401. Prescribers, patients, and the State justifiably relied to their detriment on Purdue's and Insys's misrepresentations and concealment of material fact.

402. But for the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva misrepresentation and concealment of material facts, the State would not have incurred damages in paying for medically unnecessary prescriptions and in addressing the public health crisis that the Purdue Defendants', Insys's, Mallinckrodt's, and Teva's actions have created.

403. As a direct and proximate result of the Purdue Defendants', Insys's, Mallinckrodt's, and Teva's acts and omissions as alleged herein, the State has sustained and will sustain substantial expenses and damages, described in this Amended Complaint.

404. Defendants acted, intentionally, recklessly, or with malice or willful and wanton

disregard for others, justifying an award of punitive damages.

**COUNT IV:  
NEGLIGENCE/NEGLIGENCE PER SE/GROSS NEGLIGENCE AND NEGLIGENT  
MISREPRESENTATION  
AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS**

405. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

406. Defendants have a duty to exercise reasonable care in manufacturing, marketing, selling, and distributing highly dangerous opioid drugs in Rhode Island.

407. Defendants have a duty to exercise reasonable care under the circumstances. This includes a duty not to cause foreseeable harm to others. In addition, these Defendants, having engaged in conduct that created an unreasonable risk of harm to others, had, and still have, a duty to exercise reasonable care to prevent the threatened harm.

408. Defendants are part of a limited class of registrants authorized to legally market, sell, and distribute controlled substances, which places them in a position of great trust and responsibility *vis a vis* Plaintiffs. Their duty cannot be delegated.

409. In addition, R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.04 and 21-28-3.28, and 216—RI ADC 20-20-4.7, which require that manufacturers and distributors satisfy registration and licensing requirements mandating that they “maintain effective controls against diversion of controlled substances into other than legitimate medical, scientific, or industrial channels” and comply with “applicable federal, state, and local law” are public safety laws. Each Defendant had a duty under, *inter alia*, these laws to maintain effective controls against diversion of prescription opioids to report suspicious orders of opioids, and not to fill suspicious orders unless and until due diligence had eliminated the suspicion.

410. Defendants also had a duty under the Federal Controlled Substances Act (“CSA”) and its implementing regulations, incorporated through the Rhode Island laws listed above, to

report suspicious prescribing and dispensing and to maintain systems to detect and report such activity.

411. Upon information and belief, each of the Defendants repeatedly and intentionally breached its duties.

412. The foreseeable harm from a breach of these duties is the sale, use, abuse, and diversion of prescription opioids.

413. The foreseeable harm from a breach of these duties also includes abuse, addiction, morbidity and mortality in the State.

414. Reasonably prudent manufacturers and distributors of prescription opioids would have anticipated that the scourge of opioid addiction would wreak havoc on communities, and the significant costs which would be imposed upon the governmental entities associated with those communities. Indeed, it is a violation of R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.03 and 21-28-3.28, and 216—RI ADC 20-20-4.7 for Defendants not to exercise due diligence not to ship suspicious orders unless they report such orders as required under the CSA. Defendants have a duty to maintain effective controls against diversion. The closed system of opioid distribution whereby wholesale distributors are the gatekeepers between manufacturers and pharmacies, and wherein all links in the chain have a duty to prevent diversion, exists for the purpose of controlling dangerous substances such as opioids and preventing diversion and abuse to prevent precisely these types of harms.

415. Reasonably prudent manufacturers of pharmaceutical products would know that aggressively pushing highly addictive opioids for chronic pain would result in the severe harm of addiction, foreseeably causing patients to seek increasing levels of opioids and to turn to the illegal drug market as a result of a drug addiction that was foreseeable to the Purdue Defendants,

Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva. Reasonably prudent manufacturers would know that failing to report suspicious prescribing, or paying kickbacks or engaging in deceptive and unlawful practices to encourage and permit overprescribing, particularly while assuring the public of a commitment to fighting the opioid epidemic, would exacerbate problems of diversion and non-medical use of prescription opioids.

416. Reasonably prudent manufacturers and distributors would know that failing to report suspicious orders would lead to diversion of the opioids they shipped. Reasonably prudent distributors would also know that filling such orders without first exercising due diligence would create an environment in which diversion would occur. Reasonably prudent manufacturers and distributors would also know that if they filled orders likely fuel diversion, that law enforcement would not catch and stop all diversion from such orders before harm had already occurred, and would be even less likely to do so given Defendants' misrepresentations regarding their compliance with their minimum legal obligations and voluntary commitment to exceeding those obligations.

417. Defendants acted, intentionally, recklessly, or with malice or willful and wanton disregard for others in breaching their duties, justifying an award of punitive damages. Defendants' breach of the duties described in this Count directly and proximately resulted in the injuries and damages alleged by the State.

418. In addition, the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva, in the course of their business, profession or employment, or in any other transaction in which they had a pecuniary interest, supplied false information for the guidance of others in their business transactions and failed to exercise reasonable care or competence in obtaining or communicating the information.



419. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva had a duty to the State and its residents to exercise due care in the advertising, marketing, promotion, and sale of opioid drugs.

420. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva had a duty to the State and its residents not to make false, misleading, or deceptive statements about opioids and treatment for chronic pain.

421. Insys had a duty to the State not to make false, misleading, or deceptive statements about the use of Subsys and the patients Subsys was being used to treat.

422. Teva had a duty to the State not to make false, misleading, or deceptive statements about the use of Actiq and Fentora and the patients Actiq and Fentora were being used to treat.

423. The Purdue Defendants, Teva, and Mallinckrodt had a duty to the State and its residents to report suspicious prescribers and to refrain from providing opioids to providers and pharmacies it believed, or had reason to believe, were dispensing its opioids illegally, as well as a duty not to misrepresent its commitment to adhering to this obligation.

424. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva knew or should have known that they breached the duties described above.

425. The Purdue Defendants', Insys's, Mallinckrodt's, and Teva's misrepresentations, omissions, and carelessness in this regard was done with the intention and effect of inducing the State to pay for or reimburse the costs of using opioids to treat chronic pain and of using Subsys, Actiq, and Fentora for conditions for which they were not medically necessary, approved or shown to be effective, and with reckless disregard for the costs the State would incur as a direct and proximate result, including the costs of treating addiction and implementing programs to

mitigate or reverse the prevalence of opioid addiction in Rhode Island.

426. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva knew, or should have known, that prescribers, patients, and State programs would rely on its misrepresentations and deceptive statements, and would be misled by their material omissions.

427. The Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva knew, or should have known, that as an inevitable consequence of the conduct described herein, Rhode Island citizens would suffer opioid addiction, overdose, death, and associated economic loss, and the State would suffer.

428. Prescribers, patients, and the State relied to their detriment on the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva's misrepresentations and concealment of material fact.

429. But for the Purdue Defendants', Insys's, Mallinckrodt's, and Teva's misrepresentation and concealment of material facts, the State would not have incurred damages in paying for medically unnecessary prescriptions and in addressing the public health crisis that the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva's actions have created.

430. As a direct and proximate result of the Purdue Defendants', Insys's, Mallinckrodt's, and Teva's acts and omissions as alleged herein, the State has sustained and will sustain substantial expenses and damages, described in this Amended Complaint.

431. Defendants acted, intentionally, recklessly, or with malice or willful and wanton disregard for others in breaching their duties, justifying an award of punitive damages.

**COUNT V:  
UNJUST ENRICHMENT  
AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS**

432. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs as if fully set forth herein.

433. As an expected and intended result of their conscious wrongdoing as set forth in

this Amended Complaint, the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckrodt, and Teva have profited and benefited from opioid purchases made by the State.

434. In exchange for the opioid purchases, and at the time the State made these payments, the State expected that Defendants had not engaged in deceptive practices or practices contrary to the State's public policy and causing the State to suffer a public health epidemic, as well as that Defendants had not misrepresented any material facts.

435. By illegally and deceptively promoting opioids to treat chronic pain, directly, through their control of third parties, and by acting in concert with third parties, the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, and Teva have unjustly enriched themselves at the State's expense. By Insys illegally and deceptively promoting Subsys, and by Teva illegally and deceptively promoting Actiq and Fentora for conditions for which they were not shown to be effective or approved; and by Insys's paying kickbacks and engaging in a scheme to misrepresent patient information for purposes of obtaining kickback, the State has made payments for opioid prescriptions, Insys and Teva benefited from those payments. Because of their deceptive promotion of opioids, the Purdue Defendants, Insys, Mallinckdot, and Teva obtained enrichment they would not otherwise have obtained. The enrichment was without justification and the State lacks a remedy provided by law.

436. Further, as an expected and intended result of their conscious wrongdoing as set forth in this Amended Complaint, all Defendants each have profited and benefited from the increase in the distribution and purchase of opioids within the State

437. The State has expended substantial amounts of money in an effort to remedy or mitigate the societal harms caused by Defendants' conduct.

438. These expenditures include the provision of healthcare services and treatment

services to people who use opioids among others.

439. These expenditures have helped sustain Defendants' businesses.

440. The State has conferred a benefit upon Defendants by paying for Defendants' externalities: the cost of the harms caused by Defendants' improper distribution practices.

441. Upon information and belief, the State has also conferred a benefit upon Defendants by paying for purchases by unauthorized users of prescription opioids from the Defendants' supply chain for non-medical purposes.

442. The Defendants knew that they were receiving a benefit from the State's payment of Defendants' externalities and, upon information and belief, payment for purchases by unauthorized users of prescription opioids.

443. By distributing a large volume of opioids within the State and by acting in concert with third parties, Defendants have unjustly enriched themselves at the State's expense. The State has paid for the cost of Defendants' externalities and Defendants have benefited from those payments because they allowed them to continue providing customers with a high volume of opioid products. Because of their conscious failure to exercise due diligence in preventing diversion, Defendants obtained enrichment they would not otherwise have obtained. The enrichment was without justification and the State lacks a remedy provided by law.

444. Defendants have unjustly retained a benefit to the State's detriment, and these Defendants' retention of the benefit violates the fundamental principles of justice, equity, and good conscience.

## **XII. PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, the State prays for judgment against Defendants as permitted by Rhode Island law, as follows:

- a. A finding that, by the acts alleged herein, the Purdue Defendants,

Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants have created a public nuisance;

- b. An injunction permanently enjoining Defendants from engaging in the acts and practices that violated Rhode Island laws;
- c. An order directing the Purdue Defendants, Mallinckrodt, Teva, and the Distributor Defendants to abate and pay damages for the public nuisance;
- d. For a declaration that Purdue and Insys have violated the State False Claims Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-1 *et seq.*; that the Purdue Defendants, Teva, Mallinckrodt, and Insys have engaged in fraud and fraudulent misrepresentation; and that all Defendants are liable for negligence, and unjust enrichment;
- e. For an award of treble damages for violations of the State False Claims Act under R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 9-1.1-3;
- f. For civil penalties in the amount of \$11,000 for each and every violation of the State False Claims Act under AS 09.58.010(c)(1);
- g. Compensatory damages sufficient to fairly and completely compensate for all damages alleged herein;
- h. Punitive damages;
- i. Disgorgement of Defendants' unjust enrichment, benefits, and ill-gotten gains, plus interest, acquired as a result of the unlawful or wrongful conduct alleged herein;
- j. For costs, filing fees, pre and post judgment interest, and attorney's fees; and
- k. For all other relief at law or in equity, deemed just by this Court.

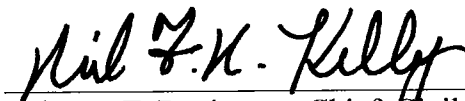
**CONFIDENTIAL – SUBJECT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER - FILED UNDER SEAL**

Dated: November 16, 2018

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

By their Attorney,

PETER F. KILMARTIN  
ATTORNEY GENERAL



Rebecca T. Partington, Chief, Civil Division  
Neil F.X. Kelly, Deputy Chief, Civil Division  
Assistant Attorneys General

**RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE  
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

150 South Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
Tel: 401-274-4400 ext. 2284  
Fax: 401-222-2995  
[nkelly@riag.ri.gov](mailto:nkelly@riag.ri.gov)

Linda Singer (*Admitted Pro Hac Vice*)  
David A. Benner (*Admitted Pro Hac Vice*)

**MOTLEY RICE LLC**  
401 9<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 1001  
Washington, DC 20004  
Tel: 202-232-5504  
Fax: 202-386-9622  
[lsinger@motleyrice.com](mailto:lsinger@motleyrice.com)  
[dbenner@motleyrice.com](mailto:dbenner@motleyrice.com)

Donald A. Migliori  
Robert J. McConnell  
**MOTLEY RICE LLC**  
55 Cedar Street, Suite 100  
Providence, RI 02903  
Tel: 401-457-7700  
Fax: 401-457-7708  
[dmigliori@motleyrice.com](mailto:dmigliori@motleyrice.com)  
[bmccconnell@motleyrice.com](mailto:bmccconnell@motleyrice.com)

*Attorneys for Plaintiff*

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
PROVIDENCE, SC

SUPERIOR COURT

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND, by and through,  
PETER F. NERONHA, ATTORNEY GENERAL,  
*Plaintiff,*

C.A. NO.: PC 2019-9399

v.

RICHARD S. SACKLER; JONATHAN D.  
SACKLER; MORTIMER D.A. SACKLER;  
KATHE A. SACKLER; ILENE SACKLER  
LEFCOURT; DAVID A. SACKLER; BEVERLY  
SACKLER; THERESA SACKLER; [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUPERIOR COURT  
FILED  
HENRY S. KINCH, JR  
19 SEP 11 AM 8:51

[REDACTED]

*Defendants;*

## **COMPLAINT**

### **I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT**

1. The State of Rhode Island, by and through its Attorney General, Peter F. Neronha, (“Rhode Island” or “State”), brings this action pursuant to his statutory and common law authority to redress Richard S. Sackler’s, Jonathan D. Sackler’s, Mortimer D.A. Sackler’s, Kathe A. Sackler’s, Ilene Sackler Lefcourt’s, David A. Sackler’s, and Beverly Sackler’s (together, “the Sacklers”) campaign to unlawfully promote and distribute opioids in Rhode Island through their control and use of Purdue Pharma, L.P.’s, Purdue Pharma Inc.’s, the Purdue Frederick Company (together, “Purdue”), and the fraudulent transfer of funds generated from such sales to the Sacklers and [REDACTED].

2. Prescription opioid are dangerous drugs that have harmed the public health, safety and welfare affecting every community in our State causing the epidemic of opioid addiction and death.



3. At the direction of the Sacklers, Purdue created the epidemic and profited from it through a web of illegal deceit.<sup>1</sup> First, Purdue deceived Rhode Island doctors and patients to get more and more people on its dangerous drugs. Second, Purdue misled them to use stronger and more dangerous doses for longer periods of time. All the while, Purdue peddled falsehoods to keep patients away from safer alternatives. Even when Purdue knew people in Rhode Island were addicted and dying, Purdue treated doctors and their patients as targets to sell more drugs. At the top of Purdue, a small group of executives and board members led the deception and pocketed billions of dollars.

4. In an effort to redress the harms posed by the opioid epidemic created by Purdue, the State of Rhode Island filed a lawsuit against the manufacturers and distributors of prescription opioids. *See Rhode Island v. Purdue Pharma, L.P., et al.*, C.A. No. PC-2018-4555, Amended Complaint (R.I. Super. Nov. 19, 2018). The factual allegations in Exhibit A are incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

5. Rhode Island brings the instant action to hold Defendants accountable for their conduct; and seeks to void transfers or distributions of Purdue's fraudulently secured revenue, and disgorgement, restitution, abatement, damages, and injunctive and equitable relief to redress the harm and halt these unfair, deceptive, and unlawful practices.

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<sup>1</sup> The State maintains that other Defendants also caused and contributed to the epidemic as set forth in *Rhode Island v. Purdue Pharma, L.P., et al.*, C.A. No. PC-2018-4555, Amended Complaint (R.I. Super. Nov. 19, 2018) (attached as Exhibit A).

## II. PARTIES

### I. PLAINTIFF

6. The State is a sovereign state of the United States. Peter F. Neronha is the duly elected Attorney General and is the chief law enforcement officer and the State's chief legal officer. The Attorney General brings this action on behalf of the State in accordance with his statutory and common law authority and pursuant to common law authority; by the Rhode Island False Claims Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-4(a); and by the Rhode Island Uniform Voidable Transactions Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 6-16-1, *et seq.*

### II. DEFENDANTS

7. The Defendants include former directors and officers of Purdue Pharma Inc. In Rhode Island, directors, officers, and employees of corporations are not immune from jurisdiction or liability when they break the law. Instead, every individual is accountable for his or her actions.

8. Defendants Richard Sackler, Beverly Sackler, David Sackler, Ilene Sackler Lefcourt, Jonathan Sackler, Kathe Sackler, Mortimer D.A. Sackler, and Theresa Sackler controlled Purdue's misconduct. Each of them took a seat on the Board of Directors of Purdue Pharma Inc. Together, they always held the controlling majority of the Board, which gave them full power over both Purdue Pharma Inc. and Purdue Pharma L.P. They directed deceptive sales and marketing practices within Purdue, sending hundreds of orders to executives and line employees. From the money that Purdue collected selling opioids, they paid themselves and their family billions of dollars.

9. Beverly Sackler, Jonathan Sackler, and Kathe Sackler reside in Connecticut. David Sackler, Ilene Sackler Lefcourt, and Mortimer D.A. Sackler reside in New York. Richard Sackler resides in Florida. Theresa Sackler resides in the United Kingdom.

10. The Sacklers, upon information and belief, have long held an ownership interest in Purdue and Rhodes, and continue to hold such an ownership interest. Through their decisions and directives, the Sacklers knowingly caused the promotion and sales of Purdue and Rhodes opioids in Rhode Island, from the sales messages passed directly to Rhode Island prescribers by Purdue sales representatives, to the third-party articles and webinars made available to Rhode Island prescribers by Purdue. Furthermore, the Sacklers also have interest in drugs developed by Purdue to treat opioid addiction and overdose. Having caused the opioid epidemic, the Sacklers, through their companies, are poised to profit off of its abatement.

11. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

12. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

13. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

14. [REDACTED]

15. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

16. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

17. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

18. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

19. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

20. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

21. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

22. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

23. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

24. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

25. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

26. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

27. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

28. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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29. [REDACTED]

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30. [REDACTED]

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31. [REDACTED]

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32. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

33. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

34. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

35. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

36. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### III. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

37. Subject-matter jurisdiction is authorized by R.I. Gen. Laws § 8-14.

38. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Sacklers because they personally directed Purdue to conduct the deceptive, negligent, fraudulent acts or practices alleged herein that took place and caused harm in Rhode Island and/or because they have the requisite minimum contacts with Rhode Island necessary to permit this court to exercise jurisdiction. Through their decisions and directives, the Sacklers knowingly caused the promotion and sale of Purdue opioids in Rhode Island, including the deceptive sales messages given to Rhode Island prescribers by sales representatives and third parties. Business activities that the Sacklers directed include Purdue's employment of a substantial number of sales representatives nationwide, including in Rhode Island, to visit doctors in their local offices for the purpose of delivering marketing messages and encouraging such doctors to write prescriptions for Purdue's opioid products. Consequently, Purdue's opioids are prescribed throughout Rhode Island by prescribers who have been exposed to Purdue's deceptive marketing, and with the Sacklers' knowledge and subject to their control, Purdue has caused its opioids to be distributed throughout Rhode Island and ultimately taken by consumers in Rhode Island.

39. Additionally, this Court has personal jurisdiction over the Sacklers because they directed Purdue's distribution of funds generated from sales of prescription opioids in Rhode Island. The Sacklers directed Purdue to distribute funds [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Purdue faced certain liabilities related to prescription opioids.

40. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

41. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 8-2-27.

**IV. THE SACKLERS LED PURDUE'S MISCONDUCT ALL THE WHILE  
DISTRIBUTING PURDUE'S PROFITS TO THEMSELVES.**

42. The State incorporates each paragraph of Exhibit A as if fully set forth herein.

43. The Sacklers were the primary architects and beneficiaries of Purdue's deception and unlawful conduct.

44. The Sacklers controlled Purdue and directed Purdue's misconduct as described herein and in Exhibit A.

45. Each of the Sacklers directed sales representatives to promote opioids to prescribers in Rhode Island.

46. Each of the Sacklers knew and intended that the sales representatives in Rhode Island would promote opioid sales that are risky for patients, including by:

- falsely blaming the dangers of opioids on patients instead of the addictive drugs;
- pushing opioids for elderly patients, without disclosing the higher risks;
- pushing opioids for patients who had never taken them before, without disclosing the risks;
- pushing opioids as substitutes for safer medications, with improper comparative claims;
- falsely assuring doctors and patients that reformulated OxyContin was safe;
- pushing doctors and patients to use higher doses of opioids, without disclosing the higher risks;



- pushing doctors and patients to use opioids for longer periods of time, without disclosing the higher risks; and
- encouraging and failing to report prescribing by doctors that Purdue knew were writing dangerous prescriptions for its opioids.

47. Each of the Sacklers knew and intended that the sales representatives would not tell Rhode Island doctors and patients the truth about Purdue's opioids. Rather, they knew that these actions would achieve their purpose by concealing the truth.

48. Each of the Sacklers knew and intended that prescribers, pharmacists, and patients in Rhode Island would rely on Purdue's deceptive sales campaign to prescribe, dispense, and take Purdue opioids. Securing that reliance was the purpose of the sales campaign.

49. Each of the Sacklers knew and intended that staff reporting to them would pay top prescribers tens of thousands of dollars to encourage other doctors to write dangerous prescriptions in Rhode Island.

50. Each of the Sacklers knew and intended that staff reporting to them would reinforce these misleading acts through thousands of additional acts in Rhode Island, including by sending deceptive publications to Rhode Island doctors and deceptively promoting Purdue opioids to Rhode Island providers and patients.

51. Each of the Sacklers knowingly and intentionally took money from Purdue's deceptive sales and marketing in Rhode Island.

52. Each of the Sacklers knowingly and intentionally sought to conceal his or her misconduct.

53. In 2007, the Sacklers and Purdue were given a second chance. Thus, the misconduct of Richard, Beverly, Ilene, Jonathan, Kathe, Mortimer, and Theresa Sackler thereafter

was particularly deceptive, unreasonable, and unlawful. From the 1990s until 2007, these individuals directed a decade of misconduct, which led to criminal convictions and commitments that Purdue would not deceive doctors and patients again. That context confirms that their misconduct following 2007 was knowing and intentional.

54. The Sackler family's first drug company was the Purdue Frederick Company, which they bought in 1952. In 1990, they created Purdue Pharma Inc. and Purdue Pharma L.P. Soon thereafter, Richard, Beverly, Ilene, Jonathan, Kathe, Mortimer, and Theresa Sackler became members of the Board.<sup>2</sup> For events before July 2012, this Complaint uses "the Sacklers" to refer to the Sackler members of the Board. David Sackler joined the Board in July 2012.<sup>3</sup> From that time forward, the use of "the Sacklers" includes David Sackler as well.

55. The Sacklers demanded that their family control Purdue. From 1990 through 2018, their family held the majority of seats on the Board. In 1994, Jonathan Sackler issued a memorandum to Purdue staff insisting that the Sacklers receive "all Quarterly Reports and any other reports directed to the Board."<sup>4</sup>

56. In 1996, Purdue launched OxyContin, which became one of the deadliest drugs of all time.<sup>5</sup> The FDA scientist who originally evaluated OxyContin initially wrote: "Care should be taken to limit competitive promotion."<sup>6</sup> The Sacklers disagreed. Rather, the Sacklers viewed restrictions on opioids as an obstacle to greater profits since the beginning. The Sacklers

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<sup>2</sup> Purdue Pharma Inc.'s 1991 filings with the Secretary of State of Connecticut state that it was incorporated in New York on October 2, 1990. Richard, Ilene, Jonathan, and Kathe Sackler are all listed as directors on the earliest (1991) report. Beverly, Mortimer, and Theresa all appear on the 1995 report.

<sup>3</sup> David Sackler affidavit.

<sup>4</sup> 1994-04-28 memo from Jonathan Sackler, PDD1701827936.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., 2016-03-15 telebriefing by CDC Director Tom Frieden ("We know of no other medication that's routinely used for a nonfatal condition that kills patients so frequently ... those who got the highest doses of opioids, more than 200 MMEs per day had a 1 in 32 chance of dying in just 21/2 years ... almost all the opioids on the market are just as addictive as heroin."), available at <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/t0315-prescribing-opioids-guidelines.html>.

<sup>6</sup> 1995-10 Overall Conclusion to 1995 FDA review, Curtis Wright, #785793.1.

considered whether they could sell OxyContin in some countries as an uncontrolled drug in order to make more money. Staff reported to Richard Sackler that selling OxyContin as “non-narcotic,” without the safeguards that protect patients from addictive drugs, would provide “a vast increase of the market potential.”<sup>7</sup> The inventor of OxyContin, Robert Kaiko, wrote to Richard to oppose this dangerous idea. Kaiko wrote that he was “very concerned” about the danger of selling OxyContin without strict controls. Kaiko warned: “I don’t believe we have a sufficiently strong case to argue that OxyContin has minimal or no abuse liability.” To the contrary, Kaiko wrote, “oxycodone containing products are still among the most abused opioids in the U.S.” Kaiko predicted: “If OxyContin is uncontrolled, ... it is highly likely that it will eventually be abused.”<sup>8</sup> Richard Sackler responded: “How substantially would it improve your sales?”<sup>9</sup>

57. Richard Sackler spoke as the Senior Vice President responsible for sales at the launch party for OxyContin. He asked the audience to imagine a series of natural disasters: an earthquake, a volcanic eruption, a hurricane, and a blizzard. He said: “the launch of OxyContin Tablets will be followed by a blizzard of prescriptions that will bury the competition. The prescription blizzard will be so deep, dense, and white....”<sup>10</sup> Over the next twenty years, the Sacklers made Richard’s boast come true. They created a manmade disaster. Their blizzard of dangerous prescriptions buried children, parents, and grandparents throughout Rhode Island, and the burials continue.

58. The Sacklers were behind Purdue’s decision to deceive doctors and patients from the beginning. In 1997, Richard Sackler, Kathe Sackler, and other Purdue executives determined—and recorded in secret internal correspondence—that doctors had the crucial misconception that

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<sup>7</sup> 1997-02-27 email from Walter Wimmer, PDD1701346000.

<sup>8</sup> 1997-02-27 email from Robert Kaiko, PDD1701345999.

<sup>9</sup> 1997-03-02 email from Richard Sackler, PDD1701345999.

<sup>10</sup> PKY180280951.

OxyContin was weaker than morphine, which led them to prescribe OxyContin much more often—even as a substitute for Tylenol.<sup>11</sup> In fact, OxyContin is more potent than morphine. Richard Sackler directed Purdue staff not to tell doctors the truth, because the truth could reduce OxyContin sales.<sup>12</sup>

59. From the beginning, the Sacklers also steered Purdue’s strategy to push opioids with the false promise that they create an enhanced “lifestyle.” In 1998, Richard Sackler instructed Purdue’s executives that OxyContin tablets provide more than merely “therapeutic” value and instead “enhance personal performance,” similar to Viagra.<sup>13</sup>

60. Most of all, the Sacklers were motivated by greed. Amassing millions of dollars was not enough—they sought billions. The Sacklers cared more about profits than about patients, their employees, or the truth. In 1999, when employee Michael Friedman reported to Richard Sackler that Purdue was making more than \$20,000,000 per week, Richard Sackler replied immediately, at midnight, that the sales were “not so great.” “After all, if we are to do 900M this year, we should be running at 75M/month. So it looks like this month could be 80 or 90M. Blah, humbug. Yawn. Where was I?”<sup>14</sup>

61. Richard Sackler became the CEO of Purdue in 1999. Jonathan, Kathe, and Mortimer Sackler were Vice Presidents.<sup>15</sup> Purdue hired hundreds of sales representatives, who

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<sup>11</sup> 1997-06-12 email from Richard Sackler, PDD8801141848 (Staff reported: “Since oxycodone is perceived as being a ‘weaker’ opioid than morphine, it has resulted in OxyContin being used much earlier for non-cancer pain. Physicians are positioning this product where Percocet, hydrocodone, and Tylenol with Codeine have been traditionally used. Since the non-cancer pain market is much greater than the cancer pain market, it is important that we allow this product to be positioned where it currently is in the physician’s mind.” Richard Sackler replied: “I think you have this issue well in hand. If there are developments, please let me know.”); 1997-05-28 email from Richard Sackler PDD1508224773; 1997-04-23 email from Richard Sackler, PDD1701801141.

<sup>12</sup> 1997-06-12 email from Richard Sackler, PDD8801141848; 1997-05-28 email from Richard Sackler PDD1508224773; 1997-04-23 email from Richard Sackler, PDD1701801141.

<sup>13</sup> 1998-09-28 email from Richard Sackler, PDD1701546497.

<sup>14</sup> 1999-06-17 email from Michael Friedman, #228728.1.

<sup>15</sup> 2000-03-26, Peter Healy, Opening the Medicine Chest: Purdue Pharma prepares to raise its profile, #24865.1.

were taught false claims to use while selling drugs.<sup>16</sup> Purdue managers tested the sales representatives on the most important false statements during training at company headquarters. On the crucial issue of addiction, which would destroy the lives of many, Purdue trained its sales representatives to misrepresent the risk of addiction. Specifically, they were trained to tell doctors that the risk of addiction was “less than one percent.”<sup>17</sup> Purdue mailed thousands of doctors promotional videos with that same false claim:

62. “There’s no question that our best, strongest pain medicines are the opioids. But these are the same drugs that have a reputation for causing addiction and other terrible things. Now, in fact, the rate of addiction amongst pain patients who are treated by doctors is much less than one percent. They don’t wear out, they go on working, they do not have serious medical side effects.”<sup>18</sup>

63. A sales representative told a reporter: “We were directed to lie. Why mince words about it? Greed took hold and overruled everything. They saw that potential for billions of dollars and just went after it.”<sup>19</sup>

64. In 2000, the Sacklers learned that a reporter was “sniffing about the OxyContin abuse story.”<sup>20</sup> The Sackler family put that topic on the agenda for the next Board meeting and began covering their tracks. They planned a response that “deflects attention away from the company owners.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> 2003-12-23 GAO Report, pg. 19, PKY183266843 (increase from 771 representatives in 1999 to 1,066 in 2001).

<sup>17</sup> Barry Meier, *Pain Killer* (1 ed. 2003) at 99.

<sup>18</sup> “I Got My Life Back” video, transcript, PDD9521403504.

<sup>19</sup> 2017-10-16, Christopher Glazek, “The Secretive Family Making Billions From The Opioid Crisis,” *Esquire* Magazine (quoting Purdue sales representative Shelby Sherman).

<sup>20</sup> 2000-11-30 email from Michael Friedman, PDD1706196247.

<sup>21</sup> 2000-12-01 email from Mortimer D. Sackler, PDD1706196246. Defendant Mortimer Sackler’s father, the late Mortimer D. Sackler, was also involved in Purdue Pharma during his lifetime.

65. Richard Sackler received a plea for help from a Purdue sales representative in January 2001. He described a community meeting at a high school, organized by mothers whose children fatally overdosed on OxyContin. “Statements were made that OxyContin sales were at the expense of dead children and the only difference between heroin and OxyContin is that you can get OxyContin from a doctor.”<sup>22</sup>

66. The next month, a federal prosecutor reported 59 deaths from OxyContin in a single state.<sup>23</sup> Knowing that the reports underestimated the destruction, Richard Sackler wrote to Purdue executives: “This is not too bad. It could have been far worse.”<sup>24</sup> A week later, on February 14, a mother wrote a letter to Purdue:<sup>25</sup>

“My son was only 28 years old when he died from Oxycontin on New Year’s Day. We all miss him very much, his wife especially on Valentines’ Day. Why would a company make a product that strong (80 and 160 mg) when they know they will kill young people? My son had a bad back and could have taken Motrin but his Dr. started him on Vicodin, then Oxycontin then Oxycontin SR. Now he is dead!”

A Purdue staff member noted: “I see a liability issue here. Any suggestions?”<sup>26</sup>

67. That same month, Richard Sackler memorialized his solution to the overwhelming evidence of overdose and death: blame and stigmatize people who become addicted to opioids. In fact, Richard Sackler wrote in a confidential email: “we have to hammer on the abusers in every way possible. They are the culprits and the problem. They are reckless criminals.”<sup>27</sup> Richard Sackler followed that approach for the rest of his career: collect the profits of addictive drugs and blame the terrible consequences on the people who became addicted. Through their misconduct,

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<sup>22</sup> 2001-01-26 email from Joseph Coggins, #171855.1.

<sup>23</sup> 2001-02-08 email from Mortimer Sacker, PDD8801151727.

<sup>24</sup> 2001-02-08 email from Richard Sackler, PDD8801151727.

<sup>25</sup> 2001-02-14 email to Robin Hogen, #3072810.1.

<sup>26</sup> 2001-02-14 email from James Heins, #3072810.1.

<sup>27</sup> 2001-02-01 email from Richard Sackler, PDD8801133516.

the Sacklers harmed Rhode Island families, and the stigma they used as a weapon exacerbated the crisis.

68. Soon after the mother's February 14 letter, the Sackler's aspiration for OxyContin sales came true: the front page of the New York Times reported that "OxyContin's sales have hit \$1 billion, more than even Viagra's." The same article noted that "OxyContin has been a factor in the deaths of at least 120 people, and medical examiners are still counting."<sup>28</sup>

69. When Time magazine published an article about OxyContin deaths in New England, Purdue employees informed Richard Sackler that they were concerned. Richard responded with a message to his staff. He wrote that Time's coverage of people who lost their lives to OxyContin was not "balanced," and the deaths were the fault of "the drug addicts," rather than Purdue. "We intend to stay the course and speak out for people in pain – who far outnumber the drug addicts abusing our product."<sup>29</sup>

70. That spring, Purdue executives met with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency ("DEA"). A senior DEA official, who sat across from Richard Sackler, leaned over the table and told him: "People are dying. Do you understand that?"<sup>30</sup>

71. Yet, at the direction of the Sacklers, Purdue kept pushing opioids and people kept dying. As a result, the company was engulfed in a wave of investigations by state attorneys general, the DEA, and the U.S. Department of Justice. In 2003, Richard Sackler left his position as President of Purdue. After a few more years of investigation, Jonathan, Kathe, and Mortimer Sackler resigned from their positions as Vice Presidents.<sup>31</sup> But the Sacklers kept control of the

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<sup>28</sup> 2001-03-05 article in *New York Times*, PDD9316101737.

<sup>29</sup> 2001-01-08 letter from Richard Sackler, PDD1501720041.

<sup>30</sup> 2001 meeting described in *Pain Killer: A "Wonder" Drug's Trail of Addiction and Death* by Barry Meier, pg. 158 (2003). The DEA official was Laura Nagel, head of the DEA Office of Diversion Control.

<sup>31</sup> 2018-09-05 declaration of Jonathan Sackler; 2018-09-08 declaration of Kathe Sackler; 2018-09-06 declaration of Mortimer Sackler.

company: they still owned Purdue and they still controlled the Board. They paid themselves handsomely, all the while continuing to direct Purdue's deceptive marketing campaign.

72. By 2006, prosecutors found damning evidence that Purdue intentionally deceived doctors and patients about its opioids. The Sacklers voted that their first drug company, the Purdue Frederick Company, should plead guilty to a felony for misbranding OxyContin as less addictive, less subject to abuse and diversion, and less likely to cause adverse events and side effects than other pain medications. The Sacklers also voted that three Purdue executives (Michael Friedman, Paul Goldenheim, and Howard Udell) — but no member of the Sackler family — should plead guilty as individuals.<sup>32</sup> Purdue subsequently approved payments of millions of dollars in compensation for these same executives.

73. In May 2007, the Sacklers voted again to have their company plead guilty and enter a series of agreements, promising that Purdue would never deceive doctors and patients about opioids again. The Purdue Frederick Company confessed to a felony and effectively went out of business.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the Sacklers continued their opioid business through their two other companies: Purdue Pharma Inc. and Purdue Pharma L.P.

74. The Sacklers voted to admit in an Agreed Statement Of Facts that, for more than six years, supervisors and employees intentionally deceived doctors about OxyContin: "Beginning on or about December 12, 1995, and continuing until on or about June 30, 2000, certain Purdue supervisors and employees, with the intent to defraud or mislead, marketed and promoted OxyContin as less addictive, less subject to abuse and diversion, and less likely to cause tolerance and withdrawal than other pain medications."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> 2006-10-25 Board minutes, PKY183307486; 2006-10-25 agreement, PPLP004031281.

<sup>33</sup> 2007-05-03 Board minutes, PKY183307494.

<sup>34</sup> 2007-05-09 Agreed Statement of Facts, paragraph 20, *available at* <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/279028-purdue-guilty-plea>



75. To remove any doubt, the Sacklers voted to enter into a plea agreement that stated: “Purdue is pleading guilty as set forth [above] because it is guilty of the crimes[.]”<sup>35</sup> Those intentional violations of the law happened while Richard Sackler was CEO; Jonathan, Kathe, and Mortimer Sackler were Vice Presidents; and Richard, Jonathan, Kathe, Mortimer, Ilene, Beverly, and Theresa Sackler were all on the Board.

76. The Sacklers also voted for Purdue to enter a Corporate Integrity Agreement with the U.S. government. The agreement required that the Sacklers ensure that Purdue did not deceive

77. doctors and patients again about Purdue opioids. The Sacklers promised to comply with rules prohibiting such and they were also required to complete training to ensure that they understood the rules. Notably, they were required to report any deception. Richard, Beverly, Ilene, Jonathan, Kathe, Mortimer, and Theresa Sackler each certified in writing to the government that he or she had read and understood the rules and would obey them.<sup>36</sup>

78. Following the 2007 agreements, the Sacklers’ misconduct should have ceased. Instead, the Sacklers decided to break the law repeatedly, expanding their deceptive sales campaign to make more money from more patients on more dangerous doses of opioids.

79. From 2007 through 2018, the Sacklers controlled Purdue’s deceptive sales campaign. They directed the company to hire hundreds more sales representatives, who visited doctors thousands more times. They insisted that sales representatives repeatedly visit the most prolific prescribers. They directed representatives to encourage doctors to prescribe more of the highest doses of opioids. They studied unlawful tactics to keep patients on opioids longer and then ordered staff to use them. They asked for detailed reports about doctors suspected of misconduct, how much money Purdue made from them, and how few of them Purdue had reported to the

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<sup>35</sup> *Id.*, at Plea Agreement.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*; 2007-05-04 Associate General Counsel’s Certificate, PDD1712900054.

authorities. They sometimes demanded more detail than others in the entire company, so staff had to create special reports just for them. Richard Sackler even went into the field to promote opioids to doctors and supervise representatives personally.

80. The Sacklers' micromanagement was so intrusive that staff begged for relief. In fact, the Vice President of Sales and Marketing wrote to the CEO:

81. "Anything you can do to reduce the direct contact of Richard into the organization is appreciated."<sup>37</sup>

82. The Sacklers' directions were followed. When the Sacklers berated sales managers, the managers turned around and delivered the message to the representatives in the field. When Richard Sackler wrote to managers, "This is bad,"<sup>38</sup> to criticize the sales of Purdue's Butrans opioid, the managers in turn drafted a warning for employees:

83. "Just today, Dr. Richard sent another email, 'This is bad,' referring to current Butrans trends."<sup>39</sup>

84. The Sacklers cared most of all about profit. Upon information and belief, from 2007 to 2018, they voted to direct Purdue to pay their family billions of dollars, including profits from opioids sold in Rhode Island. These payments show the absolute control that the Sacklers exercised over Purdue. These massive payments were the motivation for the Sacklers' misconduct. Further, these payments were deliberate decisions to benefit from deception in Rhode Island, at great cost to the State, its communities, and its residents.

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<sup>37</sup> 2012-02-07 email from Russell Gasdia, PPLPC012000368569.

<sup>38</sup> 2012-02-07 email from Richard Sackler, PPLPC012000368430.

<sup>39</sup> 2012-02-07 email from Windell Fisher, PPLPC012000368500.

85. On Valentine's Day in 2008, the Sacklers voted to pay former CEO and criminal convict Michael Friedman \$3,000,000.<sup>40</sup> It was one of several multi-million-dollar payments to the convicted executives by the Sackler family.

86. On April 18, 2008 Richard Sackler sent Kathe, Ilene, David, Jonathan, and Mortimer Sackler a secret memo about how to keep money flowing to their family. Richard wrote that Purdue's business posed a "dangerous concentration of risk." After the criminal investigations that almost reached the Sacklers, Richard wrote that it was crucial to install a CEO who would be loyal to the family: "People who will shift their loyalties rapidly under stress and temptation can become a liability from the owners' viewpoint." Richard recommended John Stewart for CEO because of his loyalty. Richard also proposed that the family should either sell Purdue in 2008 or, if they could not find a buyer, milk the profits out of the business and "distribute more free cash flow" to themselves.<sup>41</sup>

87. That month, the Sacklers voted to have Purdue pay their family \$50,000,000. From the 2007 convictions until 2018, the Sacklers voted dozens of times to pay out Purdue's opioid profits to their family — in total more than four billion dollars.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> 2008-02-14 Board minutes, PKY183212622.

<sup>41</sup> 2008-04-18 email and attached memo from Richard Sackler, PDD9316300629-631.

<sup>42</sup> 2008-04-18 Board minutes, PKY183212631-633; 2008-06-27 Board minutes. PKY183212647; 2008-09-25 Board minutes. PKY183212654; 2008-11-06 Board minutes. PKY183212662; 2009-03-05 Board minutes. PKY183212705; 2009-06-26 Board minutes, PKY183212742; 2009-09-23 Board minutes. PKY183212772; 2010-02-04 Board minutes. PKY183212818; 2010-04-01 Board minutes. PKY183212829; 2010-09-10 Board minutes. PKY183212844; 2010-12-02 Board minutes, PKY183212869-70; 2011-04-06 Board minutes. PKY183212896-97; 2011-06-24 Board minutes. PKY183212924-25; 2011-09-01 Board minutes. PKY183212927-28; 2012-07-27 Board report. pg. 44. PPLP004367403; 2012-03-05 email from Edward Mahony, PPLPC012000368627; 2013-11-01 Board report, pg. 3. PPLPC002000186913; 2014-12-03 November flash report. slide 8. PPLPC016000266403; 2015-06-05 mid-year strategic review. slide 55, PPLPC011000036000; 2017-09-14 10 year plan spreadsheet. page "CF — Internal." PPLPC021000904588.

88. When the Sacklers directed Purdue to pay their family, they knew and intended that they were paying themselves from opioid sales in Rhode Island. Purdue and the Sacklers tracked revenue from Rhode Island.

89. In addition, upon information and belief, Purdue transferred corporate entities in and out of its ownership structure in the United States to avoid settlements or to obtain releases, as suited the Sacklers' financial interests.

## **V. DEFENDANTS FRAUDULENTLY CONCEALED THEIR MISCONDUCT**

90. At all times relevant to this Complaint, the Sacklers took steps to avoid detection of and to fraudulently conceal their tortious conduct. They hid behind Purdue as the bad actor and disguised their own central role in the deceptive marketing of chronic opioid therapy. They further remained hidden by funding and working through biased science, unbranded marketing, third-party advocates, and professional associations. They hid behind the assumed credibility of these sources and relied on them to establish the accuracy and integrity of false and misleading messages about the risks and benefits of long-term opioid use for chronic pain.

91. The Sacklers thus successfully concealed from the medical community, patients, and the State facts sufficient to arouse suspicion of the claims that Rhode Island now maintains. Rhode Island did not know of the existence or scope of these Defendants' activities and could not have acquired such knowledge earlier through the exercise of reasonable diligence.

92. As a result of Defendants' efforts to conceal their misconduct, any statutes of limitation otherwise applicable to any claims asserted herein against all Defendants have been tolled by the discovery rule.

**VI. CAUSES OF ACTION**  
**COUNT I:**  
**PUBLIC NUISANCE**  
**AGAINST THE SACKLERS** [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

93. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs and those in Exhibit A as if fully set forth herein.

94. A public nuisance is an unreasonable interference with a right common to the general public, such as behavior that unreasonably interferes with the health, safety, peace, comfort or convenience of the general community.

95. Put another way, a public nuisance has been defined as an act or omission which obstructs or causes inconvenience or damage to the public in the exercise of rights common to all.

96. As the Restatement (Second) of Torts explains, “[c]ircumstances that may sustain a holding that an interference with a public right is unreasonable include . . . [w]hether the conduct involves a significant interference with the public health, public safety, the public peace, or the public convenience.” *Id.* § 821B at 87.

97. A person or people with control over the instrumentality alleged to have created the nuisance when the damage occurred may be liable for a public nuisance. In other words, one who controls a public nuisance is liable for damages caused by that nuisance.

98. Activities that interfere with a public right, if carried out in violation of state laws or local ordinances, generally have been considered unreasonable interferences.

99. The Sackler’s conduct, as described in this Complaint, unreasonably interferes with a public right, including the health, safety, peace, comfort or convenience of the general

community.

100. The Sacklers' acts and omissions obstruct or cause inconvenience or damage to the public in the exercise of rights common to all.

101. The public nuisance the Sacklers created and maintained is one that injures the citizens generally who are so circumscribed as to come within its influence.

102. The Sacklers knew and should have known that Purdue's promotion of opioids was false and misleading and that their deceptive marketing scheme and other unlawful, unfair, and fraudulent actions would create or assist in the creation of a public nuisance.

103. The Sacklers knew and should have known that their failure to comply with their statutory and common law duties to maintain effective controls against diversion, including by reporting and exercising due diligence not to fill suspicious orders, would create or assist in the creation or maintenance of a public nuisance.

104. By failing to maintain effective controls against diversion from the closed -system, including by expanding the market for prescription opioids and failing to report and stop shipment of suspicious orders, the Sacklers knowingly exacerbated the opioid crisis in Rhode Island and failed to limit its reach.

105. The Sacklers engaged in conduct proscribed by statute, ordinance or administrative regulation, as described in this Amended Complaint, including violations of the State False Claims Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-1 *et seq.*; the Rhode Island Controlled Substances Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 21-28-1.01, *et seq.*, and Administrative Code Section 216—RI ADC 20-20-4.7, which require that manufacturers and distributors maintain “effective controls against diversion of controlled substances into other than legitimate medical, scientific, or industrial channels” and comply with “applicable federal, state, and local law,” which also includes the mandates of the Federal

Controlled Substances Act set forth in 21 U.S.C. § 823 and 21 C.F.R. 1301.74(b). *See* R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.03 and 3.04.

106. The Sacklers willingly participated to a substantial extent in creating and maintaining the public nuisance. Without the Sacklers' actions, opioid use, misuse, abuse, and addiction would not have become so widespread, and the opioid epidemic that now exists would have been averted or much less severe.

107. The Sacklers had control over their acts and omissions, the instrumentalities causing the public nuisance, at the time the damage occurred. The Sacklers were in control of the "instrumentality" of the nuisance, namely the process of marketing and the creation and maintenance of the increase in the demand for prescription opioids at all relevant times, which included control of the misleading representations they conveyed through branded and unbranded marketing and product promotion resulting in the harm caused by the opioid epidemic.

108. The Sacklers controlled the deceptive marketing schemes and the instrumentalities they used to disseminate their messages and mislead the public, such as detailing by their sales representatives, online communications, publications, CME programs and other speaking events, and other means described in this Amended Complaint.

109. The Sacklers' actions in deceptively and unlawfully marketing opioids were, at the very least, a substantial factor in opioids becoming widely available and widely used and in the public health crisis that followed. The Sacklers perpetuated their deceptive advertising campaign and failed to correct their prior misstatements as the damage occurred and continues to occur. The Sacklers knew as early as 2006 that non-medical use of opioids could be predicted by their relative potency and availability.

110. Likewise, the Sacklers had control over their own shipments of opioids and over

their reporting, or lack thereof, of suspicious prescribers and orders. They controlled the systems they developed to control against diversion, including the criteria and process they used to identify red flags of suspicious orders or prescribing, whether and to what extent they trained their employees to report and exercise due diligence not to fill such orders or supply such prescribers, whether they intentionally manipulated their systems or ordering process to avoid reporting red flags or declining shipments, and whether they filled orders they knew would expand the use of addictive opioids and knew or should have known were likely to be diverted or fuel an illegal market they created resulting in the harm caused by the opioid epidemic.

111. The Sacklers were in control of the closed system for the creation and distribution of opioids, upon information and belief deliberately disregarded their duty to prevent diversion by failing to detect, report, and reject suspicious orders for opioids, causing opioids to be widely available for use, abuse, and misuse, fueling a secondary, criminal market for opioids, and magnifying their negative impact on law enforcement and causing harm to the public.

112. The public nuisance caused by prescription opioids is substantial and unreasonable interference with the public health, safety and welfare and has resulted in widespread opioid addiction, abuse, overdose, and death in the State of Rhode Island, with devastating impacts on residents and families, their communities, and government.

113. The Sacklers' conduct is unreasonable, and unlawful.

114. The Sacklers' conduct in creating and maintaining the public nuisance is ongoing and persistent.

115. Given the nature of opioids, the prior history of addiction and abuse, the importance of a closed system of distribution, and their own monitoring of the use and abuse of opioids, the Sacklers knew of the public health hazard their conduct would create and was creating in the State



and across the country.

116. The public nuisance—i.e., the opioid epidemic—created, perpetuated, maintained and the Sacklers’ acts and omissions can be abated and further recurrence of such harm and inconvenience can be abated by (a) educating prescribers (especially primary care physicians and the most prolific prescribers) and patients regarding the true risks and benefits of opioids, including the risk of addiction, in order to prevent the next cycle of addiction; (b) providing addiction treatment to patients who are already addicted to opioids; (c) retrieving and disposing of excess opioids, eliminating a primary pathway of exposure for adolescents; (d) providing screening and treatment to pregnant women and newborns to reduce the incidence and impact of prenatal exposure; (e) making naloxone widely available so that overdoses are less frequently fatal; and (f) restraining the channels for diverting opioids by appropriately setting and enforcing customer limits, reporting suspicious orders, prescribers, and customers, and stopping, rather than simply delaying, the shipment of suspicious orders, among other measures. The Sacklers can act to abate the public nuisance, and in certain respects, the law recognizes that they are uniquely well positioned and required to do so.

117. The Sacklers successfully mislead healthcare providers and patients alike, and changed the perception and practices regarding opioids. It is the manufacturer of a drug that has primary responsibility to assure the safety, efficacy, and appropriateness of a drug’s labeling, marketing, and promotion. This responsibility exists independent of any FDA regulation, to assure that its products and promotion meet both federal and state consumer protection laws and regulations. *Compare, e.g., Wyeth v. Levine*, 555 U.S. 555, 570–71 (2009) (explaining that “[t]hrough many amendments to the [Food Drug and Cosmetic Act] and to FDA regulations, it has remained a central premise of federal drug regulation that the manufacturer bears responsibility

for the content of its label at all times” and “is charged both with crafting an adequate label and with ensuring that its warnings remain adequate as long as the drug is on the market”); *id.* at 578-79 & n. 11 (further stating that “state law actions” continue to “play a critical role in “uncover[ing] unknown drug hazards and provid[ing] incentives for drug manufacturers to disclose safety risks promptly”).

118. The Sacklers are also uniquely well positioned to control and stop fueling, and to cut off at the source, diversion of prescription opioids. As registered manufacturers of controlled substances, Purdue is in a position of special trust and responsibility. Because of their direct relationship with customers in the supply chain, they are uniquely capable of determining whether a pharmacy is facilitating the diversion of prescription opioids. Manufacturers such as Purdue possessing detailed information about prescribing practices and ordering data purchased from opioid distributors are also positioned to act as a first line of defense.

119. The Sacklers’ conduct directly and proximately caused injury to the State and its residents.

120. The State has been, and continues to be, injured by the Sacklers’ actions in creating a public nuisance.

**COUNT II:  
VIOLATIONS OF THE STATE FALSE CLAIMS ACT, R.I. GEN. LAWS § 9-1.1-1 ET  
SEQ  
AGAINST THE SACKLERS**

121. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs and those in Exhibit A as if fully set forth herein.

122. R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-3(a) provides that [a]ny person who:

\_\_\_\_\_

■ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- (1) Knowingly presents, or causes to be presented a false or fraudulent claim for payment or approval;
- (2) Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement material to a false or fraudulent claim;
- (3) Conspires to commit a violation of subdivisions § 9-1.1-3 (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) or (7); . . .
- (7) Knowingly makes, uses, or causes to be made or used, a false record or statement material to an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the state, or knowingly conceals or knowingly and improperly avoids or decreases an obligation to pay or transmit money or property to the state; is liable to the state for a civil penalty of not less than five thousand five hundred dollars (\$5,500) and not more than eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000), plus three (3) times the amount of damages which the state sustains because of the act of that person. A person violating this subsection (a) shall also be liable to the state for the costs of a civil action brought to recover any such penalty or damages.

123. R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-3(b)(2) defines a claim as:

any request or demand, whether under a contract or otherwise, for money or property and whether or not the state has title to the money or property, that:(i) Is presented to an officer, employee, or agent of the state; (ii) Is made to a contractor, grantee, or other recipient, if the money or property is to be spent or used on the state's behalf or advance a state program or interest, and if the state: (A) Provides or has provided any portion of the money or property requested or demanded; or (B) Will reimburse such contractor, grantee, or other recipient for any portion of the money or property which is requested or demanded[.]

124. The Sackler's practices, as described in this Complaint, violated the State False Claims Act. The Sacklers, through the deceptive marketing of opioids for chronic pain, presented or caused to be presented false or fraudulent claims and knowingly used or caused to be used a false statement to get a false or fraudulent claim for payment approved by the State.

125. The Sacklers knew that the doctors, pharmacists, other health care providers, and/or agents of the State Medical Assistance Program, and, upon information and belief, state-funded employee benefits plans to which they deceptively marketed prescription opioids had treated and would continue to treat Rhode Island Medical Assistance Patients.

126. The Sacklers, knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded, at the time of making or disseminating these statements, or causing these statements to be made or disseminated,

that such statements were untrue, false, or misleading and were made for the purpose of getting the State's Medical Assistance Program, and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, to pay for opioids for long-term treatment of chronic pain. In addition, The Sacklers knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded, that its marketing and promotional efforts created an untrue, false, and misleading impression about the risks, benefits, and superiority of opioids for chronic pain.

127. The Sacklers knew their false statements were material to healthcare providers' decision to prescribe opioids to patients included in state-funded Medical Assistance Programs and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program. Indeed, the Sacklers intended such statements to be material to encourage additional opioid prescriptions.

128. The Sackler's scheme caused doctors to write prescriptions for opioids to treat chronic pain that were presented to the State's Medical Assistance Program, and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, for payment.

129. The State's Medical Assistance Program only covers the cost of a prescription if it is medically necessary, and requires generic substitution unless stringent conditions, which also require medical necessity, are met, as determined by criteria set forth in RI ADC 39-12:1309.10, *amended by* 210-RI ADC 30-05.2.9 (2017). The State's employee health benefit program also only reimburses prescriptions that are medically-necessary.

130. Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, other health care providers, and/or agents of the State Medical Assistance Program and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program, expressly or impliedly certified to the State that opioids were medically necessary to treat chronic pain because they were influenced by the false and misleading statements disseminated by the Sacklers about the risks, benefits, and superiority of opioids for chronic pain.

131. The Sacklers knew, deliberately ignored, or recklessly disregarded that, as a natural consequence of their actions, the State would necessarily be paying for long-term prescriptions of opioids to treat chronic pain, which were dispensed as a consequence of their fraud.

132. The Sacklers' misrepresentations and omissions were material because the risks and benefits that were distorted, including whether patients who used opioids for chronic pain were at risk of addiction and death, went to the heart of the decision to use and cover opioids. Medical Assistance Program

133. Alternatively, the misrepresentations were material because they would have a natural tendency to influence or be capable of influencing whether the costs of long-term prescriptions of opioids to treat chronic pain were paid by the State.

134. By virtue of the above-described acts, the Sacklers knowingly made, used or caused to be made or used false records and statements, and omitted material facts, to induce the State to approve and pay such false and fraudulent claims.

135. But for the Sackler's false statements and deceptive marketing schemes, the false claims at issue would not have been submitted for payment and would not have been paid by the State's Medical Assistance Program and, upon information and belief, and the State employee health benefit program.

136. The State, unaware of the falsity of the records, statements and claims made, used, or presented or caused to be made, used or presented by the Sacklers, paid claims that would not be paid but for the Sackler's illegal business practices.

137. By reason of the Sackler's unlawful acts, the State has been damaged, and continues to be damaged, in a substantial amount to be determined at trial. From January 19, 2007 through February 9, 2018 (the last date for which data are available), the State's Medical Assistance

Program spent over \$6 million to pay for prescriptions of Purdue branded opioids, and additional funds for Purdue's generic opioids, and suffered additional damages for the costs of providing and using opioids long-term to treat chronic pain.

138. The State Medical Assistance Program also spent over \$15 million over the last four years for medication assisted treatment—a number that will continue to grow.

139. Because the Sackler's unbranded marketing caused doctors to prescribe and the State to pay for long-term opioid treatment using opioids manufactured or distributed by other drug makers, the Sacklers caused and is responsible for those costs and claims as well.

140. Pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-3(a), the Sacklers are liable for to pay three times the amount of damages sustained by the State for each violation of the State False Claims Act. In addition, the Sackler's statutory violations warrant the maximum amount of civil penalties allowed by law.

**COUNT III:  
FRAUD AND FRAUDULENT MISREPRESENTATION  
AGAINST THE SACKLERS [REDACTED] [REDACTED]**

141. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs and those in Exhibit A as if fully set forth herein.

142. The Sacklers made or directed false representations intending thereby to induce patients, healthcare providers, and the State to rely thereon. In addition, the Sacklers intentionally failed to disclose material facts that they had a duty to disclose by virtue of these Defendants' other representations.

143. In overstating the benefits of and evidence for the use of opioids for chronic pain

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

and understating their very serious risks, including the risk of addiction; in disseminating misleading information regarding the appropriateness of their opioids, and in falsely portraying their efforts or commitment to rein in the diversion and abuse of opioids, The Sacklers engaged in misrepresentations, deception, and knowing omissions of material fact. The Sacklers also engaged in misrepresentations, deception, and knowing omissions of material fact in falsely promoting abuse-deterrent formulations as reducing abuse, as well as in falsely claiming that OxyContin provides 12 hours of relief.

144. Specifically, misrepresentations or omissions include, but are not limited to, those set forth in Count II above.

145. The Sacklers knew at the time that they made their misrepresentations and omissions that they were false.

146. The Sacklers intended that the State and its prescribers, patients, and payors would rely on their misrepresentations and omissions, and that such reliance would cause the State to suffer loss.

147. The Sackler's misrepresentations and omissions in this regard were made with the intention and effect of inducing the State to pay for or reimburse the costs of using opioids to treat chronic pain, with reckless disregard for the costs the State would incur as a direct and proximate result, including the costs of treating addiction and implementing programs to mitigate or reverse the public health epidemic.

148. The State justifiably relied on the Sackler's misrepresentations and omissions of material fact, to its damage.

149. The Sacklers identified many prescribers engaged in suspicious prescribing of its opioids, but failed to report its suspicions, as required by law, and failed to stop filling the

prescriptions of prescribers it suspected of illegal activity with more drugs, while claiming to be activity working to curb the opioid epidemic.

150. The Sacklers knew, or should have known, that as an inevitable consequence of the conduct described herein, Rhode Island citizens would suffer opioid addiction, overdose, death, and associated economic and other loss, and the State would likewise suffer economic and other loss. Further, the Sacklers knew, or should have known, that its failure to report suspicious prescribing or stop the supply of its drugs to these providers has resulted in continued illicit prescribing of opioids by prescribers who could have been investigated and stopped.

151. In addition, the Sackler's false representations and concealments were reasonably calculated to deceive the State and health care providers who treated patients whose care was paid for or reimbursed by the State and the patients who received the care and the State in paying for or reimbursing that care.

152. Prescribers, patients, and the State justifiably relied to their detriment on the Sackler's misrepresentations and concealment of material fact.

153. But for the Sackler's misrepresentation and concealment of material facts, the State would not have incurred damages in paying for medically unnecessary prescriptions and in addressing the public health crisis that the Sackler's actions have created.

154. As a direct and proximate result of the Sackler's acts and omissions as alleged herein, the State has sustained and will sustain substantial expenses and damages, described in this Complaint.

155. Defendants acted, intentionally, recklessly, or with malice or willful and wanton disregard for others, justifying an award of punitive damages.



**COUNT IV:  
NEGLIGENCE/NEGLIGENCE PER SE/GROSS NEGLIGENCE AND NEGLIGENT  
MISREPRESENTATION  
AGAINST THE SACKLERS [REDACTED] [REDACTED]**

156. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs and those in Exhibit A as if fully set forth herein.

157. Defendants have a duty to exercise reasonable care in manufacturing, marketing, selling, and distributing highly dangerous opioid drugs in Rhode Island.

158. Defendants have a duty to exercise reasonable care under the circumstances. This includes a duty not to cause foreseeable harm to others. In addition, these Defendants, having engaged in conduct that created an unreasonable risk of harm to others, had, and still have, a duty to exercise reasonable care to prevent the threatened harm.

159. Purdue is part of a limited class of registrants authorized to legally market, sell, and distribute controlled substances, which places them in a position of great trust and responsibility. Their duty cannot be delegated.

160. In addition, R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.04 and 21-28-3.28, and 216—RI ADC 20-20-4.7, which require that manufacturers and distributors satisfy registration and licensing requirements mandating that they “maintain effective controls against diversion of controlled substances into other than legitimate medical, scientific, or industrial channels” and comply with “applicable federal, state, and local law” are public safety laws. Each Defendant had a duty under, *inter alia*, these laws to maintain effective controls against diversion of prescription opioids to report suspicious orders of opioids, and not to fill suspicious orders unless and until due diligence had eliminated the suspicion.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

161. Defendants also had a duty under the Federal Controlled Substances Act (“CSA”) and its implementing regulations, incorporated through the Rhode Island laws listed above, to report suspicious prescribing and dispensing and to maintain systems to detect and report such activity.

162. Upon information and belief, each of the Defendants repeatedly and intentionally breached its duties.

163. The foreseeable harm from a breach of these duties is the sale, use, abuse, and diversion of prescription opioids.

164. The foreseeable harm from a breach of these duties also includes abuse, addiction, morbidity and mortality in the State.

165. Reasonably prudent manufacturers and distributors of prescription opioids would have anticipated that the scourge of opioid addiction would wreak havoc on communities, and the significant costs which would be imposed upon the governmental entities associated with those communities. Indeed, it is a violation of R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 21-28-3.03 and 21-28-3.28, and 216—RI ADC 20-20-4.7 for Defendants not to exercise due diligence not to ship suspicious orders unless they report such orders as required under the CSA. Defendants have a duty to maintain effective controls against diversion. The closed system of opioid distribution whereby wholesale distributors are the gatekeepers between manufacturers and pharmacies, and wherein all links in the chain have a duty to prevent diversion, exists for the purpose of controlling dangerous substances such as opioids and preventing diversion and abuse to prevent precisely these types of harms.

166. Reasonably prudent manufacturers of pharmaceutical products would know that aggressively pushing highly addictive opioids for chronic pain would result in the severe harm of

addiction, foreseeably causing patients to seek increasing levels of opioids and to turn to the illegal drug market as a result of a drug addiction that was foreseeable to the Sacklers. Reasonably prudent persons would know that failing to report suspicious prescribing or paying kickbacks or engaging in deceptive and unlawful practices to encourage and permit overprescribing, particularly while assuring the public of a commitment to fighting the opioid epidemic, would exacerbate problems of diversion and non-medical use of prescription opioids.

167. Reasonably prudent persons would know that failing to report suspicious orders would lead to diversion of the opioids they shipped. Reasonably prudent persons would also know that if they filled orders likely fuel diversion, that law enforcement would not catch and stop all diversion from such orders before harm had already occurred and would be even less likely to do so given Defendants' misrepresentations regarding their compliance with their minimum legal obligations and voluntary commitment to exceeding those obligations.

168. Defendants acted, intentionally, recklessly, or with malice or willful and wanton disregard for others in breaching their duties, justifying an award of punitive damages. Defendants' breach of the duties described in this Count directly and proximately resulted in the injuries and damages alleged by the State.

169. In addition, the Sacklers, in the course of their business, profession or employment, or in any other transaction in which they had a pecuniary interest, supplied false information for the guidance of others in their business transactions and failed to exercise reasonable care or competence in obtaining or communicating the information.

170. The Sacklers had a duty to the State and its residents to exercise due care in the advertising, marketing, promotion, and sale of opioid drugs.

171. The Sacklers had a duty to the State and its residents not to make false, misleading,

or deceptive statements about opioids and treatment for chronic pain.

172. The Sacklers had a duty to the State and its residents to report suspicious prescribers and to refrain from providing opioids to providers and pharmacies it believed, or had reason to believe, were dispensing its opioids illegally, as well as a duty not to misrepresent its commitment to adhering to this obligation.

173. The Sacklers knew or should have known that they breached the duties described above.

174. The Sackler's misrepresentations, omissions, and carelessness in this regard was done with the intention and effect of inducing the State to pay for or reimburse the costs of using opioids to treat chronic pain with reckless disregard for the costs the State would incur as a direct and proximate result, including the costs of treating addiction and implementing programs to mitigate or reverse the prevalence of opioid addiction in Rhode Island.

175. The Sacklers knew, or should have known, that prescribers, patients, and State programs would rely on its misrepresentations and deceptive statements and would be misled by their material omissions.

176. The Sacklers knew, or should have known, that as an inevitable consequence of the conduct described herein, Rhode Island citizens would suffer opioid addiction, overdose, death, and associated economic loss, and the State would suffer.

177. Prescribers, patients, and the State relied to their detriment on the Sackler's misrepresentations and concealment of material fact.

178. But for the Sacklers' misrepresentation and concealment of material facts, the State would not have incurred damages in paying for medically unnecessary prescriptions and in addressing the public health crisis that the Sackler's actions have created.

179. As a direct and proximate result of the Sackler's acts and omissions as alleged herein, the State has sustained and will sustain substantial expenses and damages, described in this Complaint.

180. Defendants acted, intentionally, recklessly, or with malice or willful and wanton disregard for others in breaching their duties, justifying an award of punitive damages.

**COUNT V:  
UNJUST ENRICHMENT  
AGAINST THE SACKLERS** [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

181. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs and those in Exhibit A as if fully set forth herein.

182. As an expected and intended result of their conscious wrongdoing as set forth in this Complaint, the Sackler's have profited and benefited from opioid purchases made by the State.

183. In exchange for the opioid purchases, and at the time the State made these payments, the State expected that Defendants had not engaged in deceptive practices or practices contrary to the State's public policy and causing the State to suffer a public health epidemic, as well as that Defendants had not misrepresented any material facts.

184. By illegally and deceptively promoting opioids to treat chronic pain, directly, through their control of third parties, and by acting in concert with third parties, the Sackler's have unjustly enriched themselves at the State's expense. Because of their deceptive promotion of opioids, the Sacklers obtained enrichment they would not otherwise have obtained. The enrichment was without justification and the State lacks a remedy provided by law.

185. Further, as an expected and intended result of their conscious wrongdoing as set forth in this Complaint, all Defendants each have profited and benefited from the increase in the distribution and purchase of opioids within the State

186. The State has expended substantial amounts of money in an effort to remedy or mitigate the societal harms caused by Defendants' conduct.

187. These expenditures include the provision of healthcare services and treatment

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

services to people who use opioids among others.

188. These expenditures have helped sustain Defendants' businesses and benefitted Defendants personally.

189. The State has conferred a benefit upon Defendants by paying for Defendants' externalities: the cost of the harms caused by Defendants' improper distribution practices.

190. Upon information and belief, the State has also conferred a benefit upon Defendants by paying for purchases by unauthorized users of prescription opioids from the Defendants' supply chain for non-medical purposes.

191. The Defendants knew that they were receiving a benefit from the State's payment of Defendants' externalities and, upon information and belief, payment for purchases by unauthorized users of prescription opioids.

192. By distributing a large volume of opioids within the State and by acting in concert with third parties, Defendants have unjustly enriched themselves at the State's expense. The State has paid for the cost of Defendants' externalities and Defendants have benefited from those payments because they allowed them to continue providing customers with a high volume of opioid products. In so doing, Defendants benefitted financially. Because of their conscious failure to exercise due diligence in preventing diversion, Defendants obtained enrichment they would not otherwise have obtained. The enrichment was without justification and the State lacks a remedy provided by law.

193. Defendants have unjustly retained a benefit to the State's detriment, and these Defendants' retention of the benefit violates the fundamental principles of justice, equity, and good conscience.

**COUNT VI:  
FRAUDULENT AND VOIDABLE TRANSFERS  
AGAINST ALL DEFENDANTS**

194. The State incorporates the preceding paragraphs and those in Exhibit A as if fully set forth herein.

195. The State's litigation against Purdue constitutes a claim against Purdue rendering the State a creditor of Purdue within the meaning of R.I. Gen. Laws § 6-16-1(3) and § 6-16-1(4).

196. The State's claim arose when Purdue repeatedly violated the law. At no time did Purdue and the Sacklers conduct their business within the law.

197. Despite knowing that Purdue faced certain liabilities based on its conduct, including to Rhode Island, the Sacklers continued to pay themselves hundreds of millions of dollars each year in distributions for no consideration and in bad faith. As a result of these distributions, assets are no longer available to satisfy Purdue's creditors and Purdue has threatened bankruptcy proceedings.

198. Purdue, at the direction of the Sacklers, distributed Purdue's profits to entities for the benefit of the Sacklers for no consideration, the purpose and effect of which has been to place hundreds of millions of dollars in assets beyond the reach of creditors, including the State of Rhode Island in its opioids litigation. The Sacklers gave no regard to Purdue's inability to pay creditors like Rhode Island or even negotiate a settlement in good faith, given the hundreds of millions of dollars each year hidden away by distributing those funds to the Sacklers.

199. On information and belief, the Sacklers used the Trusts as a conduit through which to distribute Purdue's funds to themselves.

200. All of the transfers of assets from Purdue to the Sacklers and the Trusts described above constituted transfers pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 6-16-1(16) and were made with actual



intent to hinder, delay, or defraud present and/or future creditors of Purdue, including the State of Rhode Island.

201. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

202. In addition or in the alternative, those conveyances were made at a time when Purdue was insolvent or became insolvent as a result of the transfer or obligation.

203. Accordingly, the State is entitled to the relief provided by R.I. Gen. Laws § 6-16-1, *et seq.*

#### **VII. PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, the State prays for judgment against Defendants as permitted by Rhode Island law, as follows:

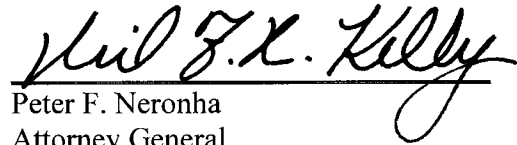
- a. A finding that, by the acts alleged herein, the Sacklers have created a public nuisance;
- b. An injunction permanently enjoining the Sacklers from engaging in the acts and practices that violated Rhode Island laws;
- c. An order directing the Sacklers to abate and pay damages for the public nuisance;
- d. For a declaration that the Sacklers have violated the State False Claims Act, R.I. Gen. Laws § 9-1.1-1 *et seq.*; that the Sacklers have engaged in fraud and fraudulent misrepresentation; and that the Sacklers are liable for negligence, and unjust enrichment;
- e. For an award of treble damages for violations of the State False Claims Act under R.I. Gen. Laws Ann. § 9-1.1-3;
- f. For civil penalties in the amount of \$11,000 for each and every violation

of the State False Claims Act under AS 09.58.010(c)(1);

- g. Compensatory damages sufficient to fairly and completely compensate for all damages alleged herein;
- h. Punitive damages;
- i. An order voiding all transfers from Purdue to Defendants and the return of all value transferred from Purdue to Defendants;
- j. Disgorgement of Defendants' unjust enrichment, benefits, and ill-gotten gains, voidable transfers plus interest, acquired as a result of the unlawful or wrongful conduct alleged herein;
- k. For costs, filing fees, pre and post judgment interest, and attorney's fees; and
- l. For all other relief at law or in equity, deemed just by this Court.

State of Rhode Island,

Dated: September 10, 2019



Peter F. Neronha  
Attorney General  
Neil F.X. Kelly, Deputy Chief, Civil Division  
Assistant Attorneys General  
**RHODE ISLAND OFFICE OF THE  
ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
150 South Main Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
Tel: 401-274-4400 ext. 2284  
Fax: 401-222-2995  
[nkelly@riag.ri.gov](mailto:nkelly@riag.ri.gov)

Robert J. McConnell  
Vincent L. Greene  
**MOTLEY RICE LLC**  
55 Cedar Street, Suite 100  
Providence, RI 02903  
Tel: 401-457-7700  
Fax: 401-457-7708  
[bmccconnell@motleyrice.com](mailto:bmccconnell@motleyrice.com)  
[vgreene@motleyrice.com](mailto:vgreene@motleyrice.com)

*Attorneys for Plaintiff*