

**April 8, 2019**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST PURDUE PHARMA**

***Raoul Alleges Opioid Manufacturer Schemed to Increase Opioid Prescriptions for Profit***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul filed a lawsuit against Purdue Pharma L.P. and Purdue Pharma Inc. (Purdue) over its deceptive marketing practices designed to significantly increase prescriptions issued for opioids.

Raoul's lawsuit was filed in Cook County Circuit Court against Purdue, an opioid pharmaceutical manufacturer based in Connecticut. According to Raoul's lawsuit, Purdue carried out an aggressive and misleading marketing effort to increase prescriptions of opioid painkillers even as communities throughout Illinois and across the country faced an opioid addiction epidemic.

According to Raoul, between 2008 and 2017, Purdue dispatched sales representatives to Illinois hundreds of thousands of times. Raoul alleged Purdue also funded third-party publications under the guise of educational materials to promote opioids and downplay their risks, using terms like "pseudo addiction." Sales representatives informed doctors and patients that the risks could be controlled. Despite knowing that its opioid painkillers were dangerous and being misused and diverted, Purdue allegedly targeted doctors with addicted patients and whose patients were diverting drugs for unlawful use. Raoul alleged that Purdue's tactics tripled prescriptions of its opioids in Illinois.

"Opioid addiction has destroyed lives and families throughout Illinois. Not only was Purdue aware of the dangers associated with its opioid products, but it downplayed those effects and used the opioid epidemic to increase its profits," Raoul said. "In addition to filing this lawsuit, I will continue to collaborate with attorneys general from across the country to investigate and take action against all of those responsible for our nation's unprecedented opioid crisis."

Opioids are often prescribed to treat severe pain, as they reduce the intensity of pain signals reaching the brain; however, they can have serious side effects and are highly addictive. Opioids – such as morphine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, oxymorphone, and methadone – are a class of narcotic drugs that include heroin, some prescription pain relievers and fentanyl.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), more than 130 Americans die each day from an opioid overdose. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), more than 2,000 Illinoisans were killed by opioid overdoses in 2017. IDPH's data also shows that between 2011 and 2016, instances of babies born with neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS), which can occur when a newborn is prenatally exposed to opiates, increased by 53 percent. Babies born with NAS experience a variety of medical complications, including withdrawal symptoms, and often require longer hospital stays after being born.

Raoul's lawsuit asks the court to prohibit Purdue's deceptive conduct in order to ensure it does not happen again in the future, and to assess penalties against Purdue. Raoul is also asking the court to require Purdue to give up revenues made as a result of the conduct, and pay to help remediate the problem.

Raoul urges anyone who believes they or a loved one may be addicted to opioids to seek help by calling the Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances at [833-2FINDHELP](tel:833-2FINDHELP), which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Deputy Bureau Chief Judith Parker; Supervising Attorney Andrea Law; and Assistant Attorneys General Jennifer Crespo and Matthew Schiltz; and Medical Director Dr. Monique Anawis, MD, JD are handling the case for Raoul's Consumer Protection Division.