Despite Addiction Concerns, FDA Approves Potent New Opioid Painkiller 1,000x Stronger Than Morphine

The Food and Drug Administration has approved a new opioid medication that's up to 10 times more powerful than fentanyl. Critics say the drug will contribute to the opioid crisis.

The new drug is called Dsuvia. It's produced by a company called AcelRx Pharmaceuticals Inc. The company says that their opioid is a 3-millimeter-wide tablet of sufentanil designed to be administered under the tongue where it will dissolve. The effects happen fast. The company sees use for acute physical pain in hospitals, surgical centers, emergency rooms, and in battlefield situations.

> *There are very tight restrictions being placed on the distribution and use of this product. We've learned much from the harmful impact that other oral opioid products can have in the context of the opioid crisis. We've applied those hard lessons as part of the steps we're taking to address safety concerns for Dsuvia." – FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb*

Opioid addiction is often considered to be the biggest crisis in the U.S. More people die from opioid overdoses than breast cancer.

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The company says that DSUVIA will not be sold in retail pharmacies or available for outpatient use. The FDA says that it cannot be used for more than 72 hours at a time. This same drug with the chemical name sufentanil is already available as

IV medication and is administered to patients with acute pain who cannot swallow a pill, but this new drug can be used for people who cannot swallow or take an IV. The company

Projected annual sales for the drug are said to be at 1.1 billion dollars. DSUVIA is expected to be available in the first quarter of next year.

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