Drug Firms Profiting From Addiction – Shipping Massive Quantities of Opioids To West Virginia

Mingo County has the fourth-highest prescription opioid death rate of any county in the United States. This county in West Virginia had a population of 26,839 in 2010 according to the census, and it has likely declined since. There are small four towns of similar population density and one city that make up Mingo County, according to Wikipedia. Kermit is is one of these towns, and it has a population around 400.

Over a period of just two years out-of-state drug companies have shipped nearly 9 million opioid pills to a single pharmacy in this town, Kermit, West Virgnia.

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In six years the drug wholesalers sold West Virgnia 780 million hydrocodone and oxycodone pills. 1,728 West Virginians have been reported to have fatally overdosed on these painkillers, according to a Gazette-Mail investigation.

> *These numbers will shake even the most cynical observer. Distributors have fed their greed on human frailties and to criminal effect. There is no excuse and should be no forgiveness." – Former Delegate Don Perdue, retired pharmacist*

In court cases, the companies have repeatedly denied they played any role in the nation's pain-pill epidemic, but records show that the state's southern counties have been

maligned by a disproportionate number of pain pills and fatal drug overdoses. The wholesalers fought to keep the sales numbers secret in previous court actions brought on by the newspaper. The unfettered shipments amount to a total of 433 pills for each man, woman, and child in West Virginia. The nation's three largest prescription drug wholesalers, McKesson Corp., Cardinal Health and AmerisourceBergen Drug Co., supplied more than half of all pain pills statewide. Be sure to check out the Charleston Gazette Mail's expose for more information; they did an amazing job on the report and the article itself.

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Opioid-prescription shippments 2007-2012
Infogram

Good News: States Are Suing

New York City sued eight companies that make or distribute prescription opioids, for their responsibility in the deadly epidemic.
Mayor Bill de Blasio said the lawsuit sought $500 million of damages to help fight the crisis. Reuters states that the opioid epidemic kills more people in the city annually than homicides and car accidents combined.

> *Big Pharma helped to fuel this epidemic by deceptively peddling these dangerous drugs and hooking millions of Americans in exchange for profit," – de Blasio said in a statement*

Defendants include the manufacturers Allergan Plc (AGN.N), Endo International Plc (ENDP.O), Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N), Purdue Pharma LP and Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd (TEVA.TA), and distributors AmerisourceBergen Corp (ABC.N), Cardinal Health Inc (CAH.N) and McKesson Corp (MCK.N).

On the 19th of Janurary, Delaware Attorney General Matt Denn sued Purdue Pharma LP and Endo International Plc, and retailers CVS and Walgreens. Two days ago Alabama became the latest state to file a lawsuit against OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma, and yesterday Baltimore City Solicitor Andre Davis announced lawsuits aimed at Purdue and their main distributor McKessen, and some of the local businesses that city officials describe as “pill mills.

Related Reading:

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- *Shaken Baby Syndrome – Child Abuse or Vaccine Injury?*
- *10 Circumcision Myths – Let’s Get the Facts Straight*

Sources:

- *Delaware sues opioid manufacturers, distributors over epidemic* – Reuters
- *Alabama sues OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma over opioid epidemic* – Reuters
- *Baltimore suing opioid manufacturers, distributors* – The Hill
- *Suing Big Pharma for the Opioid Epidemic* – The Atlantic