



LA PAZ COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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La Paz County Files Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturers and Distributors, Files in State Court for Damages to La Paz County

La Paz County—The County Attorney's Office for La Paz County released the following statement related to the County filing a state court lawsuit against the manufacturers and distributors of opioids.

“La Paz County has filed a lawsuit in La Paz County Superior Court seeking damages for the societal and financial harm it has suffered at the hands of those responsible for the opioid crisis—the manufacturers and distributors of opioids. The County is seeking a return of taxpayer dollars lost as a result of the opioid crisis and other relief to support the residents of La Paz.

As every La Paz County resident knows, our community has suffered as a result of the crisis created by the opioid manufacturers and distributors. By filing this lawsuit, the County is making it clear that our community will not simply stand by as the residents of La Paz County suffer, and will continue to suffer, while the defendant manufacturers and distributors continue to profit from their sales and distribution of highly addictive drugs.

La Paz County has retained, at no expense to the County or its taxpayers, a coalition of law firms to prosecute this action on its behalf. The litigation will be led locally by the Arizona firm of Fennemore Craig. Lead trial counsel will be the litigation boutique law firm of Theodora Oringher PC.

The County is filing in La Paz County Superior Court, instead of in the federal courts in Cleveland, OH because the case is rooted in Arizona state law and because the County believes it is important that an Arizona jury and judge decide the facts that are unique to La Paz. The filing alleges the following:

- Each of the Defendants in this action engaged in an industry-wide effort to downplay the dangerous and deadly potential effects of the misuse of prescription opioids. Simply put, these Defendants put their desire for profits above the health and wellbeing of the People of La Paz County. The County and its citizens have paid dearly as a result.
- The Manufacturer Defendants engaged in a scheme designed to increase the number of opioid prescriptions written across the state of Arizona, specifically in La Paz County. The Defendants' scheme was particularly well-suited to La Paz County because it is home to a multitude of economically and medically vulnerable populations that Defendants knew were uniquely predisposed to opioid addiction, including the elderly.
- These Defendants succeeded in dramatically increasing the number of opioid prescriptions in La Paz County by (1) concealing the truth about the risk of addiction and death associated with long-term use of their products, and (2) pressuring their respective sales forces to deceive (and bribe) local physicians and other prescribers to flood Arizona—and La Paz County—with far more opioid prescriptions than were medically necessary.
- The Distributor Defendants shipped prescription opioids throughout the country, including to addresses in La Paz County. Rather than meet their obligations under Arizona law to report suspicious orders of opioids, these Defendants willfully ignored impossibly large shipments of opioid into the County and across Arizona. They failed to report suspicious shipments despite being under clear statutory and common law obligations to do so, and in contravention of their own internal policies and procedures. The Distributor Defendants' breaches of their respective reporting obligations were willful, motivated by their desire to maximize profits and were committed without consideration of the cost to La Paz County or its citizens.

A link to the filing may be accessed here: <http://bit.ly/2KYlMnR>

The County and its residents are well aware of the harm we have suffered and the numerous steps the County has undertaken to mitigate that harm. La Paz County has made great strides in its efforts to combat the opioid crisis but has suffered a significant financial burden in the process. And the costs will keep coming for at least another generation. It is time to get relief directly from those who created this crisis, to ease the burden on the County's coffers and taxpayers that La Paz County has been forced to shoulder due to the malfeasance of the opioid manufacturers and distributors.”