

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **City of Warren Joins Litigation Against Big Pharma In Nationwide Opioid Case**

**Warren, MI** – The City of Warren is the second city in Michigan and the first in Macomb County to join a nationwide lawsuit that targets large pharmaceutical firms for grossly excessive opioid prescription rates and for enormous amounts of diversion in the supply chain.

Warren Mayor Jim Fouts said Warren joins the City of Detroit and other cities nationwide in the mass action litigation that alleges Big Pharma “manufacture and distribution deceived physicians and consumers about the dangers of opioid and allowed millions of pills to enter the market.”

The firm representing the cities is Edelson P.C., that has national recognition in mass action litigation.

Though government-led opioid-related litigation dates back more than a decade, more than 100 cases have been brought on behalf of governmental entities (i.e., states, counties, municipalities, and tribal entities). The cities that have filed include:

- Chapmanville, WV
- Chicago, IL
- Cincinnati, OH
- Dayton, OH
- Everett, WA
- Gilbert, AZ
- Huntington, WV
- Kermit, WV
- Lorain, OH
- Louisville, KY
- Parma, OH
- Portsmouth, NH
- Seattle, WA
- Tacoma, OH
- Waterbury, CT

Over 1,000 cases are expected to be brought by municipalities throughout the country. If a municipality

does not have a case or file, there is no guarantee they will be able to participate in a future settlement, if any.

In the landmark 1998 Master Settlement Agreement, state governments and the tobacco industry reached a \$206 billion settlement to be paid out over 25 years.

Fouts said in addition to the pain caused to individuals and families affected by the epidemic, communities across the United States have shouldered real costs in trying to combat the opioid epidemic. The annual estimated burden of opioid abuse in the United States totals over \$78.4 billion. Collectively, the annual revenue of these pharmaceutical companies is over \$600 billion.

**THE DEFENDANTS ARE:**

- Purdue Pharma L.P.
- Teva Pharmaceuticals
- Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
- Endo Health Solutions
- Allergan PLC
- Mallinckrodt PLC
- McKeasson
- Cardinal Health Inc.
- Amerisource Bergen

**THE OPIOIDS ARE:**

- OxyContin
- Vicodin
- Dilaudid
- Butrans
- Hysingla ER
- Targiniq ER
- Actiq
- Fentora
- And more.

The claims in the lawsuit are:

- Public Nuisance
- Negligence
- RICO
- Violations of Medicaid False Claims Act
- Violations of State Medicaid Integrity Laws
- Violations of State Consumer Protection Laws
- Unjust Enrichment
- Fraud

Damages, according to the lawsuit, are:

- Lost Productivity \$ 42 billion
- Increased Health Insurance Costs \$ 26.1 billion
- Increased Criminal Justice Costs \$ 7.6 billion
- Increased Substance Abuse Treatment and Other Social Programs \$ 2.8 billion

Fouts has been outspoken in many forums about the dangers of heroin and opiate overdoses.

He also said a national survey stated that 2% - 3% of all high school seniors have used heroin or opioids at least once by the time they graduate.

Fouts also said accidental drug overdose is currently the leading cause of injury-related death in the United States for people between the ages of 35-54 and the second leading cause of injury-related deaths for young people, and drug overdose deaths now exceed those attributed to firearms, homicides or HIV.AIDS.

It is estimated that at least 64,000 individuals die every year from prescription opioid overdoses according to the New York Times (June 5, 2017).

Fouts said city police have reported that deaths associated with opioid abuse in 2017 have already exceeded the total for 2016 and tripled since 2014.

Fouts said Warren police officers have been supplied with opioid overdose kits, including Narcan saving numerous lives.

“Clearly, it’s a growing epidemic, Big Pharma is the main culprit, and something has to be done to stop the abuse and harm it causes,” said Fouts.

Fouts and Police Commissioner Bill Dwyer recently announced a program called P.A.I.D. (People Against Illegal Drugs) that rewards residents with \$500 each for information leading to a search warrant and arrest involving illegal drug sales from a Warren residence. “The tips we are receiving show this is a regional problem,” said Fouts.

In June 2016, Warren police and the Drug Enforcement Agency raided six drug houses in Detroit resulting in the indictment of 13 members of the Detroit Polo Drug Gang on September 1.