



# Johnson and Johnson Is Ordered to Pay \$572-Million to State of Oklahoma for Causing Opioid Drug Crisis

Johnson and Johnson, the maker of the opioid painkillers Duragesic and Nucynta, was ordered to pay \$572-million in damages to the state of Oklahoma, which reportedly lost more than 6,000 people to the opioids since 2000. The judge said, "Defendants caused an opioid crisis that is evidenced by increased rates of addiction, overdose deaths, and neonatal abstinence syndrome in Oklahoma." The ruling sets a precedent as the first time a drug maker has been held responsible for their drugs. There are thousands more lawsuits from patients and state and local governments, including a case with 2,000 plaintiffs that will be tried on October.

OxyContin-maker, Purdue Pharma, owned by the Sackler family, also was initially included in Oklahoma's lawsuit, but it settled with the state for \$270-million in March. The other remaining defendant, Israel-based Teva Pharmaceuticals, settled just before the trial for \$85-million. Both companies denied wrongdoing. Johnson and Johnson said it will appeal the decision. [Once again, drug companies are fined what sounds like a spectacularly high amount of money for injuring and killing innocent people, the company decision makers receive bonuses, and profits from the sale of the drugs are far

greater than the fine. So all is in place to do the same thing again, and again. Corporate corruption will never stop until the decision makers are personally held responsible and cannot hide behind the 'corporate veil'.] -GEG

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