

Daniel's Law Newsletter

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For Immediate Release

The State of Ohio vs Big Pharma: Ohio's Position on Prescription Opioids for Chronic Pain Causes Devastation to its Citizens

Connecting Daniel's Law Chronic Pain Clause directly to the factual complaints from the State of Ohio does not give legislators much wiggle room.

COLUMBUS, Ohio (November 9, 2017) The Ohio State General Assembly will have a difficult time dismissing their own state's internal findings. Specifically, that opioids are unsafe for long-term use. Ohio has openly admitted this is a root cause issue to the increasing number of opioid addictions and deaths.

Ohio has openly admitted the safety of its citizens are at risk due to Big Pharma convincing physicians that opioids are a safe treatment for long-term pain management. Ohio has an obligation to react quickly to this admission.

Historically, prescription opioids such as Oxycontin and Percocet, and their generic equivalents, oxycodone and hydrocodone, were considered too addictive and debilitating for the treatment of chronic pain, and were only prescribed for short-term acute pain or for palliative (end of life) care.

According to the State of Ohio. By the late 1990s, and continuing to present day, Big Pharma implemented a deceptive marketing strategy to persuade doctors and patients that opioids can, and should, be used for the treatment of chronic pain. Additionally, Big Pharma falsely stated the benefits of long-term opioid use, including the supposed ability of opioids to improve function and quality of life, even though no hard evidence existed to support such claims. Furthermore, Big Pharma repeatedly assured doctors and patients that what they had long known – that opioids are addictive drugs and unsafe in most circumstances for long-term use – was untrue and quite the opposite, a compassionate treatment for pain sufferers.

Big Pharma knew its misrepresentations of the risks and benefits of opioids were not supported by scientific evidence, and much to the contrary. Indeed, the falsity of each misrepresentation has been confirmed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), specifically the CDC's Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain, issued in 2016.

Unfortunately for the doctors and patients who bought into the highly effective marketing strategy, Big Pharma's efforts were highly successful, and opioids are now the most prescribed class of drugs. In 2014 alone, drug companies generated \$11 billion in revenue from the increased use of prescribed opioids.

Despite efforts to slow this runaway train, including an open letter to the nation's physicians in August of 2016, by the then-U.S. Surgeon General, where he refers to the epidemic as an "urgent health crisis", prescribed opioids have created a public health crisis in Ohio and across the nation at epic levels.

Because of the flood of lawfully prescribed opioids to the public, several catastrophic results are occurring.

- Prescription opioids are available for illicit use and sale,
- A population of patients have been created with a physical and psychological dependency on opioids,
- Patients who can no longer afford or legitimately obtain opioids often turn to the street to buy prescription opioids or even heroin,
- Patients develop a tolerance to opioids over time requiring increased doses to maintain pain management, thus leading to dependency, addiction, and other adverse side effects,
- Opioids have become the main source of unintentional drug overdoses in Ohio, and are responsible for the rapidly increasing number of annual drug related deaths.

In Conclusion

Like big tobacco companies, Big Pharma uses third parties and their testimonials, which they often fund, direct, and control, to carry out their erroneous campaign and conceal the truth of the risk to patients of long-term opioid use. Pro-opioid doctors are one of the most important avenues that Big Pharma uses to spread these false and deceptive statements about the risks and benefits of opioid use.

Pronouncements and guidance from the FDA and CDC confirming Big Pharma's claims were false and deceptive have been ignored, as well as all longstanding extensive scientific evidence to the contrary.

Legislative reform that could reduce the quantity of opioid use back to pre-epidemic levels and still permit some clinical judgement has been introduced in the form of House Bill 167 (Daniel's Law Ohio). Implementation of Daniel's Law Ohio would save countless Ohioan's lives. www.danielsstory.org.