

# W.VA. AG SUES OPIOID MAKERS JOHNSON & JOHNSON, TEVA PHARMACEUTICALS

Posted on August 23, 2019 by Tyler Barker



CHARLESTON, WV (WOAY) — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey filed suit Friday against two major manufacturers of opioid painkillers – Johnson & Johnson and Teva Pharmaceuticals.

The Attorney General alleges both manufacturers helped fuel the opioid epidemic by individually engaging in strategic campaigns to deceive prescribers and misrepresent the risks and benefits of opioid painkillers.

“The widespread deception alleged in our lawsuits cannot be tolerated,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “Bad actors within the pharmaceutical supply channel cause immense harm to the state of West Virginia and its citizens. They must be held accountable for their actions.”

The lawsuits, filed separately in Boone County Circuit Court, allege the defendants fraudulently concealed misconduct, mischaracterized and failed to disclose the serious risk of addiction, overstated the benefits of chronic opioid therapy and promoted higher dosage amounts without disclosing inherently greater risks.

The Johnson & Johnson lawsuit alleges its subsidiary and co-defendant, Janssen Pharmaceuticals Inc., turned the standard of care on its head by choosing to persuade concerned doctors that the opioids they had been unwilling to prescribe were more effective and safe enough for wide and long-term use, even for treatment of relatively minor pain conditions.



Similarly, the Teva lawsuit alleges that sales representatives for that manufacturer marketed the fentanyl-based opioid Actiq to non-oncologists and pain clinic doctors, even though the representatives knew the drug in question was for cancer patients.

Both lawsuits allege the manufacturers' conduct and campaign of misrepresentations led to opioids becoming a common treatment for chronic pain in West Virginia, a reality that fueled substance abuse and the state's skyrocketing rate of overdose deaths.

The Attorney General alleges the manufacturers' conduct violated the state's Consumer Credit and Protection Act and caused a public nuisance. Both lawsuits seek injunctive and equitable relief.

The Teva Pharmaceuticals USA Inc. lawsuit also names Cephalon Inc. as a defendant. Both are subsidiaries of Teva Pharmaceuticals Limited.

The civil complaints can be read at <http://bit.ly/2Nr0tM1> (Teva) and <http://bit.ly/2ziYbGq> (Johnson & Johnson).