Drug Distributors Reach $260M Deal in Ongoing Ohio Opioid Lawsuit

Three distributors and a drugmaker may avert the first federal trial over their role in the U.S. opioid crisis.

October 23, 2019 By Casey Halter

Three drug distributors that together handle 90% of U.S drugs have agreed to a $215 million deal with two Ohio counties over ongoing litigation concerning their role in feeding the U.S. opioid crisis. Additionally, one pharmaceutical company will pay $20 million in cash. The announcement helps the four entities avoid the first-ever federal trial over drug manufacturers' and distributors' role in the addiction epidemic. The companies may also resume talks to try to reach a $48 billion settlement for all litigation against them with regard to opioids, Reuters reports.

Drug distributors AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson and drugmaker Teva Pharmaceutical agreed to the deal earlier this week, quashing the immediate threat of a jury trial that was set to begin Monday in Cleveland. Under the local settlement, the distributors would pay a combined $215 million immediately to Cuyahoga and Summit counties in Ohio and Teva would pay $20 million in cash and contribute $25 million worth of Suboxone.

The four companies have been accused of fueling and purposely ignoring the U.S. opioid crisis, which has killed nearly 400,000 Americans over the past decade, according to government data. Statements issued by the companies' legal reps say they will continue to "strongly" dispute the allegations against them but are happy with the this latest decision.

The settlement adds to similar deals worth $66.4 million that the two Ohio counties struck earlier this year with Mallinckrodt, Eno International and Allergan.

To learn more about the ongoing legal battle for U.S. opioid payouts, click here.

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