

Press Release

November 4, 2019

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CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris: 516- 676-2008  
safeglencove@yahoo.com

### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: First Federal Trial on Opioid Crisis Averted**

According to The Washington Post, the nation's three biggest drug distributors and a major drugmaker agreed to a late minute \$260 million settlement over the toll taken by opioids in two Ohio counties, averting the first federal trial over the crisis.

The trial, involving Cleveland's Cuyahoga County and Akron's Summit County, was seen as a critical test case that could have gauged the strength of the opposing sides' arguments and prodded the industry and its foes toward a nationwide resolution of nearly all lawsuits over opioids. The agreement was struck shortly before a jury that was scheduled to hear opening arguments in federal court in Cleveland. Drug distributors AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson will pay a combined \$215 million. Israeli-based drugmaker Teva will contribute \$20 million in cash and \$25 million worth of generic Suboxone, a drug used to treat opioid addiction. The deal contains no admission of wrongdoing by the defendants.

Across the U.S., the pharmaceutical industry still faces more than 2,600 other lawsuits over the crisis. Participants in those cases said the Ohio deal buys them time to try to work out a nationwide settlement of all claims. It could also turn up the pressure to work out such a deal, because every partial settlement reached reduces the amount of money the companies have available to pay other plaintiffs. The multitude of lawsuits was brought against drug manufacturers, suppliers and sellers by state and local governments, Native American tribes, hospitals and others. For nearly two years, a federal judge in Ohio has been pushing the parties toward one big settlement.

The only defendant left in the trial that had been scheduled for Monday is the drugstore chain Walgreens. The new plan is for Walgreens and other pharmacies to go to trial within six months. The settlement enables both sides to avoid the risks and uncertainties involved in a trial: The counties immediately lock in money they can use to deal with the crisis, and the drug companies

In a statement, the three major distributors said the settlement money should be used on treatment, rehab and mental health services.

Those suing the industry have accused it of aggressively marketing opioids while downplaying the risks of addiction and turning a blind eye toward suspiciously large shipments of the drugs. The industry has denied wrongdoing. Industry CEOs and attorneys general from four states met where the offer was a deal worth potentially \$48 billion in cash and addiction-treatment drugs to settle cases nationally.

Those attorney generals reiterated Monday that they have worked out a "framework" for a settlement. They said they hope other states and local governments sign on.

OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma, reached a tentative settlement that could be worth up to \$12 billion. But half the states and hundreds of local governments oppose it. It remains to be seen whether the settlement will receive the approvals it needs.

The Washington Post has been monitoring the opioid crisis. To read the full article please visit [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/companies-reach-tentative-deal-to-settle-opioids-lawsuit/2019/10/21/5ad49ede-f400-11e9-b2d2-1f37c9d82dbb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/companies-reach-tentative-deal-to-settle-opioids-lawsuit/2019/10/21/5ad49ede-f400-11e9-b2d2-1f37c9d82dbb_story.html)

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled, "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org)