

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: West Virginia Landmark Trial Over Opioid Epidemic

According to a recent article in The Washington Post, a long-awaited trial involving three major prescription opioid distributors began in federal court in West Virginia, the outcome of which could set the tone for future litigation related to the nationwide opioid crisis. Three co-defendants -- McKesson Corporation, AmerisourceBergen and Cardinal Health are being accused of creating a public nuisance with the ongoing opioid epidemic by failing to monitor, divert and report suspicious orders under the Controlled Substances Act.

Between 2006 and 2014, the three companies distributed a combined total of over 57 million doses of hydrocodone and oxycodone to the community of about 100,000 people, with AmerisourceBergen sending the most -- 36 million doses, the complaint alleges.

West Virginia is a fitting location for trial as it was among the states with the highest opioid-involved overdose death rates in the country in 2018, according to data from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. In 2018, West Virginia providers wrote 69.3 opioid prescriptions for every 100 persons, compared to the average US rate of 51.4 prescriptions, the data shows. The rate of drug overdose deaths in Cabell County West Virginia is even higher than the state average, according to the federal court complaint document. In 2017, 183 people died of a drug overdose in Cabell County alone -- more than in any other West Virginia county. West Virginia, which has been considered to be ground zero of the opioid epidemic, being flooded with tens of millions of opioids, more than this community of 100,000 residents could require or bear.

More than three years after the lawsuit was first filed in 2017, the "Big Three" drug distributors are finally being held accountable. Justice is being sought on behalf of all the residents and the financial ability to provide the programs, treatment and support that they deserve and need.

The Washington Post is a major American daily newspaper published in Washington, D.C. It has taken a leadership role in following the Nations opioid epidemic. Please visit The Post's Opioid Files for more information at www.washingtonpost.com.

The SAFE Glen Cove 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 or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at www.safeglencove.org.