



Board of Commissioners

PRESS RELEASE

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County Contact: Jason W. Boyd
440.350.2745
jason.boyd@lakecountyohio.gov

Lake County Awarded \$306 Million in Opioid Litigation

PAINESVILLE, Ohio, August 17, 2022– Lake County Awarded \$306 Million in Opioid Litigation Judge Dan Aaron Polster of United States District Court, Northern District of Ohio Eastern Division issued the Abatement Order in the National Prescription Opiate Litigation which awards Lake County \$306.2 million over 15 years. Lake, along with Trumbull County, were participants in the Track Three case that began on October 4, 2021.

“Today marks the start of a new day in our fight to end the opioid epidemic. After years of doing what we could with limited resources, Lake County will finally receive the funds that are desperately needed to help abate the opioid epidemic from our community. Lake County remains committed to continuing the critical relief work performed by our incredible frontline workers consistent with the court’s ruling,” said Commission President John R. Hamercheck.

It is estimated that 61 million pills were dispensed in Lake County from 2012 – 2016; 265 pills for every resident. Impacts of the epidemic are evident within countless local agencies including law enforcement, children services, local courts, coroner and local treatment facilities.

“I am grateful to the Court for recognizing the Opioid epidemic as a public health crisis. This decision holds Big Pharma accountable for the great harm and lives lost due to the overselling of Opioids. Lake County is committed to investing the \$306.2 million awarded to us to address the devastating impact of Opioid addiction in our local community. We hope the legal precedent that Lake and Trumbull Counties have won together will set the stage for the rest of the nation and help end the Opioid epidemic,” said Lake County Commissioner John Plecnik.



From left to right: County Commissioner Mark Tyler, Commissioner John Hamercheck, Lake ADAMHS Board Director Kim Frasier, Commissioner John Plecnik reviewing Abatement Order

The trial included over 30 witnesses from the Counties and defendants. Lake and Trumbull Counties were selected by the Court as a bellwether trial, or a test case to gauge where future trials may end up. This lawsuit was one of thousands filed throughout the United States.

“As a former Mayor and now County Commissioner, I have witnessed the community impacts resulting from the opioid epidemic and am thankful to the jury and Judge Polster on the results of this most difficult trial. While this is not the end of the fight, Lake County is certainly ready to begin the healing process,” said Commissioner Mark Tyler.

The jury of 12 individuals sided with Lake and Trumbull Counties in their verdict read by Judge Polster on November 23, 2021.

“With today’s decision, Judge Polster has affirmed what we have known for nearly two decades, that our County and citizens have unnecessarily suffered from the national prescription opiate crisis. Additionally, this important investment in our communities will allow us to make meaningful change...too many lives have been lost, but these resources will result a in life-changing investment in prevention and treatment in our County,” said Lake County ADAMHS Board Executive Director Kim Fraser.

Lake County and Trumbull County previously agreed to settlements with Giant Eagle and Rite Aid. The counties, along with their countless partners, remain committed to addressing the opioid problem in our communities. The County’s work in, among other areas, counseling, educational outreach and providing treatment options are essential to the well-being of affected families.

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