

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

San Mateo County Secures Major Accountability Win in Opioid Fight

REDWOOD CITY, Calif. -- San Mateo County today announced an important development in the County's legal efforts to hold opioid manufacturers accountable for the profound harm caused by their actions.

San Mateo County was among the first government entities to take legal action against the Sackler family and Purdue Pharma, joining communities nationwide that continue to grapple with addiction, overdose deaths, and enduring trauma. Families throughout the county still feel the impact of this epidemic every day, and the County's legal work has been grounded in a commitment to accountability and justice for those harmed.

"In the face of widespread harm, public institutions have a responsibility to act," said County Attorney John Nibbelin. "While no litigation outcome can undo the devastating consequences of the opioid crisis, this resolution ensures accountability and directs resources to the communities that have borne the impact."

In 2019, Purdue Pharma filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy under the weight of thousands of lawsuits. During the proceedings, the Sackler family — owners and executives of Purdue — sought broad personal immunity from future opioid-related lawsuits. San Mateo County, alongside plaintiffs nationwide, opposed these protections.

In June 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a proposed settlement that would have granted sweeping immunity to the Sackler family. Following further

negotiations, a \$7.4 billion final settlement was reached in January 2025 among the Sacklers, Purdue Pharma, states, and counties.

Under the agreement, San Mateo County will receive an estimated \$3.3 million in additional opioid remediation funds from the Sacklers over several years, plus approximately \$1.5 million from the Purdue bankruptcy estate. In total, the County's current and projected opioid settlement funding is approximately \$49 million.

These dollars will be directed toward prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery initiatives designed to save lives and support residents struggling with addiction. "While no financial recovery can repair the loss of life, or erase the pain experienced by families, this funding helps ensure those responsible contribute to the solutions our community needs," said Health Chief Colleen Chawla. "These funds will help us deliver essential, life-saving services, and ensure our response remains grounded in compassion, equity, and accountability."

To date, settlement dollars have supported local efforts by:

- expanding addiction treatment in County jails for those most at risk
- increasing treatment and recovery resources at San Mateo Medical Center
- supporting services at the Redwood City Navigation Center
- enhancing capacity for community-based behavioral health providers
- improving access to life-saving overdose reversal medications countywide
- establishing an interagency Overdose Steering Committee to guide coordinated prevention efforts
- increasing detox services and pathways to long-term treatment
- strengthening data and reporting systems to better track needs and outcomes

"These cases have always been about honoring the people harmed; those we've lost, those still struggling, and the families who have carried so much pain," said Assistant County Attorney David Silberman.

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