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News Release 2024-07

**ATTORNEY GENERAL LOPEZ ANNOUNCES MULTIMILLION DOLLAR
SETTLEMENT WITH NATIONAL MARKETING FIRM PUBLICIS OVER ROLE IN
OPIOID EPIDEMIC**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2024

HONOLULU – Attorney General Anne Lopez today announced a \$350 million national settlement with Publicis Health to resolve investigations into the global marketing and communications firm’s role in the prescription opioid crisis. Hawai‘i is slated to receive \$1,113,545 from the settlement to help address the opioid crisis.

In agreeing to the terms of the settlement, Publicis recognized the harm its conduct caused, and the agreement will give communities hit hardest by the opioid crisis, more financial support for treatment and recovery, building lasting infrastructure, and saving lives. The company will also disclose on a public website, thousands of internal documents detailing its work for opioid companies like Purdue Pharma and will stop accepting client work related to opioid-based Schedule II or Schedule III controlled substances.

“This is another significant milestone in our quest for accountability against those responsible for fueling the opioid epidemic. We hope this will discourage corporations from similar misconduct in the future and help provide a path forward for healing and recovery in our communities,” said Attorney General Lopez.

The filing in O‘ahu’s First Circuit Court describes how Publicis’ work contributed to the crisis by helping Purdue Pharma and other opioid manufacturers market and sell opioids. Court documents detail how Publicis acted as Purdue’s agency of record for all its branded opioid drugs, including OxyContin, even developing sales tactics that relied on farming data from recordings of personal health-related in-office conversations between patients and providers. The company was also instrumental in Purdue’s decision to market OxyContin to providers on patient’s electronic health records.

According to Department of Health (DOH), Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System Branch data from 2021-2022, there were 85 deaths attributed to opioid overdoses in 2021, and another 98 deaths in 2022. These deaths—and the impacts on thousands who have

struggled with opioid addiction—have created considerable costs for Hawai'i's health care, child welfare, and criminal justice systems.

“More significant than the dollars and cents in damage to our state, is the impact of opioid addiction, substance use, and overdose deaths, which have torn families apart, damaged relationships, and devastated communities,” said Dr. Kenneth Fink, Department of Health director. “DOH is committed to ensuring that any funds allocated in settlements to the state through DOH will be stewarded responsibly, strategically, and expeditiously.”

This filing is the latest action Attorney General Lopez has taken to combat the opioid crisis and to hold accountable those responsible for creating and fueling the crisis. To date, Hawai'i has received up to \$18 million in legal settlements with drug manufacturers and others for their roles in the crisis.

A copy of the First Circuit Court filing can be found [here](#).

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