

**TOP TAKEAWAYS**

# Nuisance Lawsuits Won't Solve the Opioid Crisis

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## **OPIOID ABUSE HAS BECOME A NATIONWIDE EPIDEMIC**

- Opioid abuse has enormous costs to our society.
  - Between 1999 and 2016, opioid overdoses killed more than 350,000 people in the U.S.
  - In 2016 alone, opioid overdoses accounted for more than 42,000 deaths.
- Unfortunately, plaintiff lawyers are attempting to exploit the opioid crisis to extract large payouts from the pharmaceutical companies.

## **NUISANCE LITIGATION WON'T FIX THE OPIOID CRISIS**

- For an injury to constitute a public nuisance, it must cause injury to the general public.
  - The vast majority of people who are prescribed pain killers do not misuse the product or become addicted.
- Due to massive attorneys' fees, only a tiny fraction of any financial settlement will find its way to the government.
- Using the courts to regulate medicines is an abuse of our justice system.

## **CONSUMERS ARE THE ONES WHO SUFFER**

- Consumers are the ones who bear the costs of these lawsuits in the form of:
  - Higher drug prices.
  - Reduced access to pain medications for patients who need them.
- Furthermore, lawsuits draw funding away from the research and development of new medications and cures as well as from helpful programs.

## **THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO COMBAT THE OPIOID CRISIS**

- Legislation, regulation, law enforcement, treatment, and education can help to solve this significant public health problem. This includes:
  - Setting limits on the amount of medicine that can be prescribed.
  - Requiring doctors to use prescription drug monitoring databases.
  - Expanding treatment options for those who need it.
  - Reducing supply by cutting off the flow of illicit drug.
  - Implementing public education initiatives.

*It is important to remember that, if used correctly, opioids relieve pain and can help those who are suffering. Policymakers can prioritize the opioid epidemic without harming consumers by focusing on a multi-pronged approach that doesn't require hundreds of frivolous lawsuits.*