

State's Attorney Gibbons Files Suit For Damages Against Purdue Pharma L.P., To Compensate For Opioid Epidemic Damages

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE — Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons announced Friday his office is filing a claim for damages against Purdue Pharma L.P., to compensate Madison County families and local government for damages resulting from the opioid epidemic.

Gibbons also recommends the majority of any money received by Madison County should go into a victims' compensation fund for families of overdose death victims, with the remainder set aside to fund grants for treatment, education and public safety programs.

State's Attorney Gibbons has been a leader in the fight against the opioid epidemic throughout his service as State's Attorney. More recently, Gibbons has been working with a group of Illinois State's Attorneys and the Attorney General to secure compensation from a mass settlement with Purdue Pharma L.P., available for local governments to claim compensation.

Specific amounts to be paid will be determined through a claims management process. Purdue Pharma L.P. has filed bankruptcy, which requires part of the process will have to go through the federal bankruptcy Court. Illinois, along with other states, sued Purdue for losses suffered as a result of opioid prescription pain killers, such as OxyContin.

The Attorney General's Office has been working with State's Attorneys since the beginning of the litigation. Currently, Gibbons is coordinating the claim effort with Madison County Coroner Steve Nonn, Sheriff John Lakin, the Madison County Health Department and other potentially impacted County Departments.

"For decades, certain pharmacy companies have poisoned our community, ruining families and so many precious lives in their pursuit of profits from highly addictive, deadly drugs," Gibbons said. "Over the years, families have watched loved ones taken down the dark path of addiction – never to return. Taxpayers have had to pay the bills for the epidemic as our County and local governments have had to endure increased costs for public safety and the heartbreaking costs of responding to overdoses and overdose deaths. All of this was caused by pharmaceutical companies and paid from your taxes, and it's time these perpetrators pay the families and taxpayers back," said Gibbons.

Madison County Coroner Steve Nonn, who has helped lead the fight alongside Gibbons, recognized the terrible hardships caused by the opioid epidemic and expressed his sympathy and support for families and for the claim effort, stating, "My exceptional team of Deputy Coroners has been a first-hand witness to the excruciating pain and suffering of loved ones at the scene of so many opioid overdose deaths. We can never fully replace lost loved ones or repair the harm that has been suffered by so many families and individuals in our community. Their losses are immeasurable. However, by holding the perpetrators accountable and hitting them where it hurts the most, we can

secure funding that is desperately needed to provide compensation for those who have lost a loved one, as well as critical funding to help those families still going through the nightmare of opioid addiction and to increase our efforts to prevent future suffering.

"We need to do everything we can to help those who are suffering and to finally put an end to this horrific chapter in our history. I am once again calling on our County government to join me as a partner in this effort to support families who have lost a loved one and to restore stolen taxpayer money. We need to help the families that have suffered the ultimate loss, as well as those currently engaged in the fight against addiction, and also take necessary steps to prevent others from suffering this same terrible fate. We should be using the settlement funds to support families who have lost a loved one and to pay for treatment, education and public safety efforts," said Gibbons.

Other local governments in Madison County may be able to file claims, but there is a deadline for filing that is fast approaching. The Civil Division of the State's Attorney's Office is available to assist local governments in the claims process.