



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **ST. CHARLES COUNTY FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST OPIOID DRUG COMPANIES, DISTRIBUTORS**

**ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO** – St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann announced today the County has filed a lawsuit against pharmaceutical manufacturers and drug distributors for their aggressive and fraudulent marketing of prescription opioid painkillers that has led to a drug epidemic throughout the County and nationwide.

“There has been both a human and financial cost to this epidemic,” says County Executive Steve Ehlmann. “I think just about every family in our county has been affected by this epidemic or knows a family who has been.” Ehlmann says that, aside from the human cost, “St. Charles County taxpayers have experienced costs and losses directly related to the actions of these drug companies. The opioid crisis has reshaped the daily reality in our County in numerous ways, putting a greater demand on law enforcement, health services, corrections and the courts. County government has also expended dollars on community education programs and programs to treat those with opioid-related addiction.”

The county seeks relief in the complaint that includes compensatory and punitive damages for the millions of dollars it spends each year to combat the public nuisance created by the drug companies’ deceptive marketing campaign that misrepresented the safety and efficacy of long-term opioid use.

The County’s lawsuit seeks to hold the defendants responsible for what many are calling the worst man-made epidemic in modern medical history. The county was the first in the St. Louis region to train its police, sheriff’s deputies and correctional officers to administer Naloxone (Narcan) and is seeking to recover those costs. According to the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, St. Charles County had 301 deaths due to opioid overdoses from 2013-2017. Missouri is one of the 20 worst states for drug overdose deaths.

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**About St. Charles County:**

*Founded in 1812, St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri, and the state’s third largest county in both population and economic share. It is home to 15 scenic county parks encompassing more than 3,643 acres with additional land under development and more in reserve for future development.*

*With a population of 395,504, St Charles County is home to large employers including General Motors, Citi, MasterCard Worldwide and Boeing. It is ranked among the top 25 counties in the nation in high-tech job growth by the Progressive Policy Institute and consistently has the lowest unemployment rate in the Metropolitan St. Louis area.*

*St. Charles County Government employs nearly 1,100 in more than 30 departments and offices, who work to make the county an excellent place to live, work and shop. For more information, please visit [sccmo.org](http://sccmo.org).*