

Good afternoon, and thank you all for joining us. Today, we're here to announce a major step toward a historic \$26 billion settlement with three major pharmaceutical distributors: AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health, and McKesson, as well as Johnson & Johnson, which manufactured and marketed opioids, for the companies' role in creating and fueling the opioid epidemic that has ravaged Kentucky communities for more than a decade.

The announcement comes as a result of investigations by our office and attorneys general across the country into how these three distributors failed to fulfill their legal duty by shipping opioids to pharmacies that submitted suspicious drug orders and how Johnson & Johnson misled patients and doctors about the addictive nature of opioid drugs.

This settlement has been long and hard-fought, but we have remained committed to ensuring that the companies are held accountable and that the Commonwealth receives its share. As a result, Kentucky stands to receive in excess of \$460 million, which will provide the state and local governments with substantial funds to come alongside Kentuckians who struggle with addiction by supporting opioid abatement programs.

Holding these companies accountable for their role in the opioid crisis has been a top priority since day one of my administration. As a candidate, I ran on fighting the opioid epidemic and today we're making good on that promise.

There is hardly a family anywhere in the Commonwealth that has been immune to the scourge of opioids. We've lost thousands of our fellow Kentuckians and seen families and children torn apart by the grips of addiction.

Today's announcement is for each one of them...

For the mom who lost her son in the prime of his life...

For the father who begs his daughter to enter treatment...

For the young girl, in foster care, who prays every day that her parents will get better, and she can return home.

These are the stories of the opioid epidemic. These are the Kentuckians we are fighting for.

Let today's announcement signal to each and every Kentuckian that we will always be in their corner, and we will use every available tool to support the important work that is being done to treat addiction, support individuals in recovery, and further the work of opioid abatement programs.

As part of the terms of this agreement, once finalized, the three distributors collectively will pay up to \$21 billion total over 18 years and Johnson & Johnson will pay up to \$5 billion over nine years. The substantial majority of the money is to be spent on opioid treatment and prevention.

The agreement doesn't conclude the process, but it is a major next step in our efforts to return these settlement dollars to the Commonwealth.

Our office now has 30 days to review the agreement. Rest assured that we will be doing our due diligence to make sure the terms are right for the Commonwealth. But, we are optimistic that the settlement will go forward and the Commonwealth will receive the maximum payment of more than \$460 million, because all of our local governments are on board as a result of passing House Bill 427.

The funds will be distributed in alignment with the terms of House Bill 427, which was sponsored by Representative Danny Bentley and passed with bipartisan support by the General Assembly earlier this year.

We worked closely with legislators, KACo, KLC, and many others to reach the terms outlined in that bill and ensure that the Commonwealth was in line to receive maximum funding from the settlement with the distributors. I look forward to continuing this collaboration as the settlement process proceeds.

Today's announcement brings hope and help in the fight against the opioid epidemic. No state was harder hit than Kentucky, and recovery from this epidemic will be a long process. But, as Attorney General, I remain committed to the promise I made when I ran for office and will continue the fight at every turn.

The fight doesn't end today. In addition to seeing this settlement implemented, I will continue to pursue litigation against pharmacies and other manufacturers that have yet to come to terms.

Remarks By Attorney General Daniel Cameron
Press Conference Announcing Agreement with Opioid Companies
July 21, 2021
As Prepared

You have my word that if this settlement does not come to fruition, then we will haul these companies into courtrooms across the Commonwealth to answer for their actions. Justice will be served.

I'll now turn over the microphone to Representative Danny Bentley who we worked closely with on House Bill 427 to ensure Kentucky was positioned to receive this more than \$460 million settlement.