

# Beaver County Suit Claims Opioid-Related Industries Lied About Drugs' Addictive Qualities

By TYLER POLK • OCT 16, 2017

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*A lawsuit by Beaver County says doctors, pharmacies and manufacturers of opioids didn't talk enough about how addictive the drug could become.*

PATRICK SISON /AP

Beaver County announced Monday it is suing for millions of dollars in damages from opioid manufacturers, drug distributors and physicians.

The civil suit claims 23 drug companies and doctors led consumers to believe that opioids were not addictive and the county spent taxpayer dollars responding to hundreds of deaths and overdoses.

In 2016, [Beaver County](#) saw 102 deaths caused by overdose and 51 deaths have occurred this year, according to [OverDoseFreePA](#), a website that tracks the rate of deaths in the state.

Bob Peirce, an attorney with Robert Peirce and Associates, said the suit covers the deaths of people, the cost of treatment and repeat overdoses.

“Our suit alleges and we have evidence to prove that the drug companies and their doctors deliberately misrepresented the fact that these drugs were addictive,” he said. “In fact, they lied and said they were not addictive.”

The opioid epidemic is affecting all of Pennsylvania including [Allegheny County](#), where 650 people died last year from overdose and 427 people have died so far this year.

Peirce expects more counties around Pennsylvania to take action.

“We have discussed this with at least four or five other counties in western Pennsylvania and I think within the next two weeks you’ll see a number other counties filing a similar lawsuit,” Peirce said.

This is the third suit filed by a county in Pennsylvania. [Lackawanna](#) and [Delaware](#) counties filed similar suits in September.

The suit is civil, instead of criminal, Peirce said, because legislation protects pharmaceutical companies.

“If there’s to be a criminal case, it has to be brought to them by the Attorney General,” said Peirce. “One opportunity we have is to go after them civilly. If it costs them billions of dollars, then that’s a way I think they will change.”