

Earlier this month, a coalition of Wisconsin counties announced their lawsuit against drug manufacturers for their alleged role in the opioid epidemic, and many have asked me why the state has not yet filed a lawsuit of its own.

Upon taking office in 2015, I made the opioid epidemic my number one priority. And rightfully so. The state's opioid epidemic is one of the biggest public health and safety challenges in decades. Last year alone, 827 Wisconsinites died from drug overdose deaths. That's why Wisconsin joined forty other states to investigate the major opioid manufacturers.

In September 2017, the multi-state investigation made public that it had served investigative subpoenas, also known as Civil Investigative Demands, on the major opioid manufacturers: Endo, Janssen, Teva/Cephalon, Allergan, and Purdue Pharma. We have demanded documents and information from these companies and their related entities to determine if they engaged in unlawful practices in marketing and selling opioids.

Historically, multi-state investigations like this one have led to substantial recoveries for participating states due to the states' broad investigative authority and ability to negotiate with companies and avoid the delays and costs associated with litigation. State attorneys general have the authority to serve subpoenas and obtain documents and information without many of the procedural hurdles and discovery challenges faced in any major litigation.

Needless to say, if the coalition of states determines a lawsuit is necessary, I will pursue this strategy. However, filing a lawsuit now will likely lead to delay tactics and endless litigation that could last many years.

For example, in 2014, the City of Chicago filed a lawsuit against the very same manufacturers we are investigating. Today, the city's case is stayed pending a decision as to whether the city will be consolidated as part of the growing Multidistrict Litigation. Meanwhile, the city faces mounting costs related to heroin overdoses with no end in sight.

As a participant in the recent successful multi-state investigations of Volkswagen and Wells Fargo, I feel confident that the investigative route we are currently taking with the opioid manufacturers will result in better outcomes for the State of Wisconsin than we would receive if we pursued action on our own. This also is the wisest use of state resources. Multi-state investigations allow us the ability to both prepare for litigation while pursuing the possibility of a settlement. The unified voice of more than 40 states cannot be ignored by the opioid manufacturers and I intend to bring a meaningful and prompt resolution for the citizens of our state.

At DOJ, in addition to litigation, we have been using all the tools on our belt to fight this epidemic: prevention, enforcement, public awareness, and treatment.

Since April 2015, we've safely collected and disposed of more than 330,000 pounds of unused prescription medications, preventing their potential misuse and abuse. We've arrested and prosecuted countless drug dealers in all corners of our state, stopping deadly drugs from flowing into our communities. For instance, on September 18, 2017, the Division of Criminal Investigation arrested 18 individuals and seized approximately 1.5 kilos of heroin, recovered over \$100,000 in cash and took 18 firearms off of the street as part of just one single case in Milwaukee. We've

focused on public awareness and our award-winning Dose of Reality campaign to end prescription painkiller abuse in Wisconsin is a national prevention model that is now being used in Maine, Minnesota, and Nebraska. Wisconsin DOJ administers treatment courts in 51 counties and two tribes, providing alternatives to incarceration for non-violent drug offenders and giving folks the ability to turn their lives around. And, we're working to expand treatment by also leading a 43-state lawsuit against Indivior, a manufacturer whose alleged antitrust scheme blocks generic competitors and artificially high prices for those seeking a medication assisted treatment for people addicted to heroin and opioids.

I promised to prioritize public safety over politics. While filing our own individual lawsuit might serve my short term political interests, the litigation plan and additional harm reduction strategies we've employed for the last three years are in the best interest of Wisconsin and the countless victims of the state's opioid epidemic