

Philly targets big pharma in suit over opioid epidemic

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Singapore - Allergan. Johnson & Johnson. Cephalon are three of the pharmaceutical companies Philadelphia has filed suit against in an effort to recoup its losses in the opioid epidemic that it's termed "a public health nightmare."

During the peak of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, 935 people died from the disease. Last year, about 1,200 people died of drug overdoses — 80 percent of them related to opioids.

The opioid manufacturers are directly implicated in the opioid crisis.

"This epidemic can be traced back to the defendants' false and deceptive marketing to doctors — and to the public — that these drugs were safe and effective for long-term daily treatment of chronic pain," city solicitor Sozi Tulante said.

The lawsuit, filed in state court, aims to begin changing what the city calls aggressive and deceptive marketing tactics.

The city also wants the companies to help the city financially in light of its expenditures for first responders, public health programs and the prison system.

The opioid epidemic has cost the city "millions of dollars."