

## **Stoughton Joins the Fight Against the Opioid Distributors and Manufacturers**

STOUGHTON, MA. – June 29, 2018 – The Town of Stoughton is taking action to hold accountable the companies responsible for dumping millions of dollars' worth of prescription opiates into its community, filing a public nuisance lawsuit against the pharmaceutical drug manufacturers and wholesale drug distributors that made the opioid epidemic possible.

Stoughton is joining a growing list of over 70 Massachusetts cities and towns that are taking action against the drug manufacturers and distributors responsible for fueling the opioid crisis in their communities. The Town of Stoughton has filed suit against five of the largest manufacturers of prescription opioids and their related companies and against the country's three largest wholesale drug distributors. The goal of the lawsuit is to recoup town budget dollars spent for law enforcement, emergency medical services, Narcan, education, prevention, treatment costs, etc. and to ensure that the manufactures and distributors are adhering to federal laws, as well as revising their policies and practices to ensure public safety.

The people of Massachusetts and the Town of Stoughton continue to bear the burden of the cost of the epidemic, as the costs of treatment for addiction, education and law enforcement have continued to rise. According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, in 2016, 2,069 people lost their lives due to opioid-related overdoses in the state, a 15 percent increase from the prior year. In 2017, the Stoughton Police Department responded to 44 opiate-related overdoses in Stoughton, 6 of those 44 were fatal.

Stoughton Police Chief McNamara stated "The Stoughton Police department is pleased to see that the Town of Stoughton has joined the public nuisance lawsuit against opioid distributors. The Long and devastating effects to the families and friends of those who are afflicted with addiction is not one that likely will soon resolve."

According to Stoughton Fire Chief Laracy, "The Stoughton Fire Department has seen a substantial call volume to responses to Opioid overdoses over the past few years. These types of calls require a substantial expenditure of manpower and medical supplies. As Fire Chief I support the Town of Stoughton taking action to hold accountable the companies responsible for the Opioid crisis within our community."

"Over the past 10 years, Stoughton has taken many bold steps to address this issue head-on" said Stephanie Patton, Prevention Coordinator for the Town. "We have never shied away from confronting this issue. Our Police Department was the first in the Commonwealth to equip our Officers with life-saving Narcan (outside a small Department of Public Health project). Our OASIS Coalition works collaboratively across local departments and agencies to implement research-based policies, practices and programs aimed at reducing youth use of alcohol and other drugs. We have seen hopeful reductions in drug and alcohol use among our youth, but continue to see concerning overdose rates among adults in our community. This lawsuit is another strategy Stoughton can use to impact this complicated problem and I am proud that Stoughton is participating in this fight."

The Town of Stoughton is working with a consortium of law firms to hold pharmaceutical drug manufacturers and wholesale distributors accountable for failing to do what they were charged with doing under the federal Controlled Substances Act – monitor, identify and report suspicious activity in the size and frequency of opioid shipments to pharmacies and hospitals. This litigation is spearheaded in Massachusetts by [Sweeney Merrigan Law](#), Rodman, Rodman & Sandman, and KP Law, which make up the Massachusetts Opioid Litigation Attorneys team known as MOLA.

The Town has hired expert law firms, experienced in holding the powerful pharmaceutical industry accountable. In addition to the local firm named above, MOLA includes 6 national firms: Baron & Budd; Levin, Papantonio, Thomas, Mitchell, Rafferty & Proctor; Greene Ketchum Bailey Farrell & Tweel; Hill, Peterson, Carper, Bee & Deitzler; McHugh Fuller Law Group;