



November 5, 2021

Several years ago, Mississippi became the first State in the country to file suit against opioid manufacturers to hold them accountable for their part in the epidemic that has cost us in lives lost, families torn apart, and public health and safety dollars spent in response. Following years of litigation, negotiations have now generated two multi-billion-dollar settlements with three opioid distributors, Cardinal Health, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen, as well as Johnson & Johnson, a leading manufacturer.

The two settlement agreements are complex and include provisions that allow the defendants to claw back funds if we do not (1) meet requirements for the vast majority of the funds be used specifically for the treatment and abatement of opioids and (2) ensure the participation of specific cities and counties within the State.

Mississippi has suffered great loss and I am committed to ensuring every dollar our State and local governments is due remains in Mississippi and is not clawed back by the defendants. To that end, we worked with the University of Mississippi Medical Center to create a program that meets the opioid abatement requirements for the State. **This will free local governments up to use your funds as you see fit without a national fund administrator micromanaging their use.**

UMMC's Center for Addiction Medicine (CAM) will provide a patient-centered treatment program for patients of all ages and across the State through a continuum of inpatient, outpatient, and chronic care settings. This will include leveraging UMMC's Center for Telehealth and utilizing existing and new collaborative community partnerships to address healthcare disparities in rural Mississippi.

The national settlement proposed a split of funds due to each state as: 70% to an abatement fund, 15% to a State fund, 15% to a local government fund. And, we propose to follow the same allocation formula in Mississippi. However, **we also want to use a portion of the State fund to help local governments meet their contractual obligations to their attorneys who have helped to bring us to these settlements.**

My office has created a website (<https://www.ago.state.ms.us/opioidsettlement/>) with information related to the settlements, including the maximum amount your community will receive if all required local governments participate. **Again, under the terms of the settlement agreements, you will lose funds unless all specific counties and cities agree to participate.**

Here is what you need to do next to help your community get the full amount of funds it is due under these settlements:

1. Sign and return the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU may be submitted by email to opioidsettlement@ago.ms.gov or by using the submission portal at <https://www.ago.state.ms.us/opioidsettlement>.
2. Register your community on the national settlement website (<https://nationalopioidsettlement.com>) and complete the required documents. The website requires the entry of a unique identifier code to register your city or county. Please email opioidsettlement@ago.ms.gov to request your code.

The deadline for the State and our local governments to participate is January 2, 2022. If you are unable to register using your assigned participation code or have additional questions after reviewing the website, please contact Ta'Shia Gordon at (601) 359-3070 or send an email to opioidsettlement@ago.ms.gov.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation. Mississippi led the country in fighting the industry that spawned and fueled the opioid epidemic. We have the opportunity with this settlement to continue to lead the country in abating the opioid epidemic, as well.

Sincerely,



Lynn Fitch
Attorney General
State of Mississippi