

Doug Peterson

[Home \(/\)](#) / [News \(/news\)](#)

/ [Attorney General Peterson Announces \\$26 Billion Agreement with Opioid Distributors/Manufacturer](#)

Attorney General Peterson Announces \$26 Billion Agreement with Opioid Distributors/Manufacturer

Posted: Wednesday, July 21, 2021

Lincoln--Attorney General Doug Peterson today announced a historic \$26 billion multistate agreement that will help bring desperately needed relief to people across the country who are struggling with opioid addiction. The agreement includes Cardinal, McKesson, and AmerisourceBergen – the nation’s three major pharmaceutical distributors – and Johnson & Johnson, which manufactured and marketed opioids. The agreement also requires significant industry changes that will help prevent this type of crisis from ever happening again.

The three distributors collectively will pay up to \$21 billion over 18 years. Johnson and Johnson will pay up to \$5 billion over nine years with, up to \$3.7 billion paid during the first three years.

The majority of the money is to be spent on opioid treatment and prevention. Each state’s share of the funding has been determined by agreement among the states using a formula that takes into account the impact of the crisis on the state-the number of overdose deaths, the number of residents with substance use disorder, and the number of opioids prescribed-and the population of the state.

This settlement comes as a result of investigations by state attorneys general into whether the three distributors fulfilled their legal duty to refuse to ship opioids to pharmacies that submitted suspicious drug orders.

In 2016, the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, the University Nebraska Medical Center, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, along with the Nebraska State Patrol, the US Attorney's Office, and DEA officials, formed the Nebraska Coalition to End Opioid Misuse. Since its inception, the Coalition has been focused on opioid abuse treatment, prevention efforts, and law enforcement issues. The Coalition has taken several progressive steps to address opioid abuse in Nebraska including, changes in pain management training at medical education institutions, greater rural access for treatment through the ECHO program, state professional guidelines for issuing opioid prescriptions, and prevention education. However, with the anticipated settlement funds, Nebraska will be able to have greater ability to expand services especially in the area of treatment programs.

"I have greatly appreciated the significant efforts given in the last five years by the members of the Nebraska Coalition to End Opioid Misuse. As a result of those efforts, we have been able to reduce the impact of opioid misuse in our state. However, with the anticipated settlement funds, we should be able to make a significant impact in treating every Nebraskan who suffers from an opioid addiction. We will need to continue to be vigilant on this issue," said Attorney General Peterson.

"In collaboration with our statewide partners and as proud members of the coalition to stem opioid abuse, UNMC remains focused on the steady work to proactively address opioid abuse and help transform lives to create a healthy future," said UNMC Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, MD. "We will actively participate in the next stages of this process and continue to address this public health issue through education, treatment and training of health professionals and health profession students."

"Nebraska's approach to the opioid epidemic over the last few years has focused on building partnerships and resources across this great state. Addressing opioid misuse and abuse and preventing drug overdoses in our state continues to be a priority. Being proactive in addressing prevention, treatment, recovery at the city, county, community and state level will help improve health outcomes and save lives," stated Sheri Dawson, Director of Behavioral Health in Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services.

"On behalf of municipal officials across the state, we sincerely appreciate the outstanding leadership, collaboration, and advocacy by Attorney General Peterson and his team in effectively representing the interests of all Nebraskans throughout the years of litigation and negotiations with the major companies which

manufactured and distributed opioids. Following hundreds of thousands of overdose deaths due to the opioid epidemic, these settlement agreements will help save countless lives by providing significant funds to treat, prevent, educate, and pay for related costs to continue the fight against opioid abuse,” expressed Lynn Rex, Executive Director of the League of Nebraska Municipalities.

“We thank Attorney General Doug Peterson and his team for their diligent work on this important litigation and related efforts. NACO especially thanks the Attorney General for ensuring that NACO and similar stakeholders were informed and consulted on each development in these cases. As county resources have been stretched responding to citizens harmed by the plague of opioid addiction, today’s announcement marks an important milestone in our combined efforts to make our communities healthier and safer”, said NACO Executive Director, Jon Cannon.

In 2020, the Nebraska Legislature enacted the Nebraska Opioid Prevention and Treatment Act with state, county, and municipal officials, and subject-matter experts in public health and addiction treatment throughout Nebraska. The Nebraska Opioid Prevention and Treatment Act is deferential to the particular terms of any settlement with any opioid defendant.

A separate lawsuit has been filed against Purdue Pharma, the largest manufacturer of prescription opioids. Purdue is in bankruptcy proceedings. The bankruptcy court is currently evaluating a proposed settlement with the states.

State negotiations were led by Attorneys General Josh Stein (NC), Herbert Slatery (TN), and the attorneys general from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

**Download Nebraska Response to
Opioids Timeline
(/sites/ago.nebraska.gov/files/doc/Nebraska%20Opioid%20Summit%20Timeline%20Hyperlinked%202_3.pdf)**

Nebraska Attorney General

2115 State Capitol

Lincoln, NE 68509

(402) 471-2683

[Contact Us \(/contact-us\)](#)



(https://twitter.com/AGDougPeterson?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)



(<https://www.facebook.com/AGDougPeterson>)



(<https://www.instagram.com/agdougpeterson/>)



(<https://ago.nebraska.gov/rss/news>)

[Contact Us \(/contact-us\)](#)

[Nebraska Attorney General](#)

© 2022 State of Nebraska | [Nebraska.gov \(http://www.nebraska.gov/\)](http://www.nebraska.gov/) | [Policies](#)

(<http://www.nebraska.gov/policies/>) | Designed by NIC Nebraska (<http://www.nebraska-interactive.com/>)

| [Login \(/user\)](#)