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# Southern DAILY

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## Following opioid suits, family behind deadly OxyContin squabbles

NEW YORK (Reuters) - A united front among members of the billionaire Sackler family behind painkiller OxyContin is showing signs of strain from litigation over who bears responsibility for the deadly U.S. opioid epidemic.

At least twice in recent months, eight members of the Sackler family who own OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma LP have been at odds over how to respond to allegations implicating them in deceptive marketing of prescription painkillers that led to widespread fatal overdoses, said people familiar with the matter.

The family members have split into two groups that their advisers dub the "A side" and "B side," the people said.

One point of contention centers on how aggressively former Purdue President Richard Sackler should disavow emails he had written years earlier that maligned opioid addicts, a debate that came to a head in anticipation of a critical segment on HBO's news satire "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver."

Another disagreement surfaced over legal defense tactics, with a lawyer for one faction initially counseling against Purdue settling an Oklahoma case in favor of a bankruptcy filing that would halt lawsuits.

The family dynamics will likely influence how the Sacklers resolve roughly 2,000 lawsuits by cities, counties and states alleging Purdue pushed prescription painkillers on unsuspecting doctors and patients while concealing their addiction and overdose risks.

The Sacklers, longtime philanthropists worth an estimated \$13 billion, are attempting to reach a settlement covering all the litigation and will need to agree among themselves how much to pay. U.S. communities are seeking billions of dollars in damages to address harm from opioids, and settlement discussions will help determine how much money they get.

The lawsuits, which in recent months have targeted the Sacklers in addition to Purdue, claim the family and company contributed to a public health crisis that claimed the lives of nearly 400,000 people between 1999 and 2017, according to the latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Family members declined to be interviewed by Reuters about their internal debates.

"In any family or business grappling with important choices, it is normal for a range of opinions to be discussed and options presented," the two Sackler contingents said in a joint statement. "This internal discussion is necessary for reaching the right decisions in a collaborative way, and in no way signifies a split within our family," the statement said.

"The reality is that we are united in both our deep desire to help address today's crisis of drug addiction and in our knowledge that we did not cause this complex public health crisis. We all hope to resolve the many lawsuits through a fair global resolution" that steers settlement funds to affected communities, the family's statement added.

This account of some of their deliberations is based on court records and interviews with several people close to the family's discussions. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the conversations. Purdue declined to address the Sacklers' private talks. It has noted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved labels for the company's opioids that carried warnings about risk and abuse associated with treating pain. Purdue and the Sacklers have denied allegations in lawsuits that they contributed to the opioid crisis, and have pointed to heroin and fentanyl as more significant culprits than prescription painkillers.

According to court records and people familiar with the matter, the two Sackler factions each comprise relatives of the late Mortimer and Raymond Sackler, two of three brothers, all doctors, who purchased a Purdue predecessor in 1952.



FILE PHOTO: Bottles of prescription painkiller OxyContin made by Purdue Pharma LP sit on a shelf at a local pharmacy in Provo, Utah, U.S., April 25, 2017. REUTERS/George Frey/File Photo

In a June 2018 lawsuit, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey named the eight Sacklers making up the two factions, targeting their role serving on Purdue's board.

In January, she disclosed details of emails and other internal records that alleged the Sacklers masterminded aggressive opioid sales despite knowledge of their harmful effects.

The Sacklers together countered in court papers that they were typical, passive board members who approved routine management requests rather than micromanaging the marketing of OxyContin. Still, the allegations eventually prompted various renowned museums in New York and London to shun donations from the family.

In March, a critical family debate ensued about how to resolve a separate, longstanding lawsuit against Purdue brought by Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter.

There were two options for averting a trial slated for late May. One was settling the lawsuit. The other was putting Purdue into bankruptcy court, which would halt the Oklahoma case and other litigation.

David Bernick, a lawyer from Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP representing the "B" side, initially counseled against settling the Oklahoma lawsuit, people familiar with the matter said. He was concerned thousands of other plaintiffs would seize upon a financial figure in any agreement and demand costly settlements themselves, they said.

The better option, he felt, would be for Purdue to seek bankruptcy protection and negotiate with Hunter and other litigants under the supervision of a judge in Chapter 11 proceedings. Advisers on Mortimer's "A" side of the family argued for settling, confident that the agreement's structure would combat expectations from other plaintiffs for similar financial sums. Ultimately, both sides of the family united to contribute \$75 million toward settling the Oklahoma case, which helped finance a national addiction treatment center. The family released a statement cautioning that the agreement, which totaled \$270 million with contributions from Purdue, was "not a financial model for future settlement discussions." Bernick declined to comment on the settlement discussions.

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## U.S. says Huawei lawyer's prior work at Justice Department poses conflicts

(Reuters) - Huawei Technologies Co Ltd lawyer James Cole's prior work at the U.S. Department of Justice created conflicts of interest that should disqualify him from defending the Chinese company in a case of alleged bank fraud and sanctions violations, U.S. prosecutors said in a filing on Friday.

Last week, the prosecutors filed a motion to disqualify Cole, who served as deputy attorney general, the No. 2 official at the Justice Department, between 2011 and 2015. But the motion was sealed and classified, and prosecutors did not make public the reasons behind the move.

"There is a 'substantial risk' that Cole could use 'confidential factual information' obtained while serving as DAG to 'materially advance' Huawei's current defense strategy," the prosecutors said, according to a redacted copy of the U.S. motion filed on Friday in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn, New York.

Cole was not immediately available for comment. But in a statement Huawei said the U.S. wants to strip the company of counsel of its choice while concealing the facts on why.

"The Justice Department's motion to disqualify Jim Cole makes a mockery of the adversarial process," the statement said.

"The government has known since 2017 that Mr. Cole represented Huawei in this matter. Now, two years later, not only does the Justice Department seek to strip Huawei of counsel of its choice, but it does so while concealing from Huawei and the public virtually all of the facts on which it bases its motion."

The case against Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, has ratcheted up tensions between Beijing and Washington as the world's top two economic powers try to negotiate a trade deal.

The company's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, daughter of Huawei's founder, was arrested in Canada in December at the behest of U.S. authorities for her role in the alleged fraud. Meng has said she is innocent and is fighting extradition.

In Friday's filing, U.S. prosecutors said Cole's representation of Huawei poses "irresolvable conflicts of interest."

As deputy attorney general, Cole "personally supervised and participated in aspects of" an investigation that caused the conflicts, the prosecutors said in the filing.



FILE PHOTO: A man walks past a sign board of Huawei at CES (Consumer Electronics Show) Asia 2018 in Shanghai, China June 14, 2018. REUTERS/Aly Song/File Photo

Details of that probe were redacted, but the filing said the Huawei prosecution is "substantially related" to the matter.

The prosecutors said Cole possessed information from his government work related to his Huawei representation that he could not reveal, and this created the risk he would rely on the information in breach his duties to the Justice Department.

Secondly, because the nature of the conflict is classified, the prosecutors said, Huawei cannot obtain enough information for them to waive any conflict.

The case against Huawei and Meng accuses them of conspiring to defraud HSBC Holdings Plc and other banks by misrepresenting Huawei's relationship with Skycom Tech Co Ltd, a company that operated in Iran, putting the banks at risk of penalties for processing transactions that violated U.S. sanctions laws.

Huawei has said Skycom was a local business partner. The United States maintains it was an unofficial subsidiary used to conceal Huawei's Iran business.

U.S. authorities claim Huawei used Skycom to obtain embargoed U.S. goods, technology and services in Iran, and to move money via the international banking system.

Last month, prosecutors said they planned to use information about Huawei in the case that was obtained through secret surveillance.

Cole entered a not guilty plea on behalf of Huawei and its U.S. subsidiary in Brooklyn on March 14.



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# Editor's Choice



A group of Moroccans living in the Imlil mountainous region and other cities, attend a solidarity hike, tracing the same route which European tourists Louisa Vesterager Jespersen and Maren Ueland were on before they were captured and killed by extremists last month, Imlil, Morocco REUTERS/Youssef Boudlal



A group of Moroccans living in the Imlil mountainous region and other cities, pose for a photographs at the place where the European tourists Louisa Vesterager Jespersen and Maren Ueland were captured and killed by extremists last month, Imlil, Morocco REUTERS/Youssef Boudlal



Potential 2020 Democratic presidential candidate U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) speaks at an Organizing Event in Manchester, New Hampshire, U.S.. REUTERS/Brian Snyder



Clemson, SC, USA; Virginia Cavaliers guard Kyle Guy (5) is defended by Clemson Tigers forward Aamir Simms (25) and guard Clyde Trapp (0) during the second half of the game at Littlejohn Coliseum. Cavaliers won 63-43. Mandatory Credit: Joshua S. Kelly-USA TODAY Sports



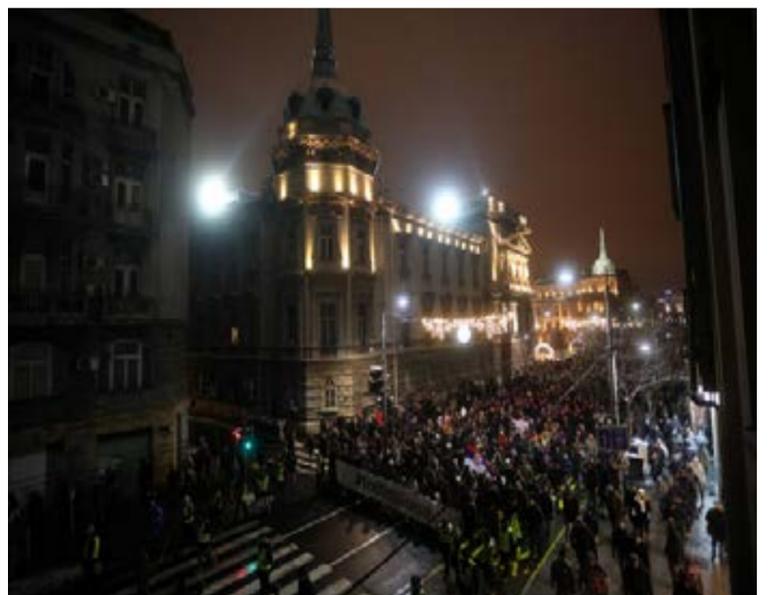
Supporters of James Goddard block a road outside the police station in central London, Britain REUTERS/Simon Dawson



Furloughed government workers, contractors and their families attended a free community dinner donated from families and community organization during the partial U.S. government shutdown in Silver Spring, Maryland



Rugby Union - European Rugby Champions Cup - Round 5 - Pool 1 - Bath Rugby v Wasps - Recreation Ground, Bath, Britain - Luke Charteris of Bath Rugby in action Action Images via Reuters/Matthew



Demonstrators march during a protest against Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and his government in central Belgrade, Serbia, REUTERS/Djordje Kojadinovic

***The Number of Overweight People In The U.S. Has Increased Significantly in Recent Years***

**Obesity Greatly Increases Risk Of Serious Disease And Early Death, Warn Researchers**

Being obese is linked to a significantly higher chance of serious disease and early death than being a healthy weight, research on more than 2.8 million adults suggests.

The chance of suffering serious illness goes up with increasing weight gain, experts analysing health, death and sickness data from UK adults found.

How much does the risk increase as your BMI rises?

Presented at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in Glasgow, the study found that people with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 to 35 were at 70% higher risk of developing heart failure than their healthy weight peers.

Even a BMI of 25 to 30 increased the risk by 20%, while a BMI of 35 to 40 more than doubled the risk and a BMI of 40 to 45 almost quadrupled the risk compared to people of a normal weight.

The study also found that compared with normal weight individuals, a BMI of 25 to 30 increased the risk of Type 2 diabetes and sleep apnoea by more than double, while a person with a BMI of 30 to 35 was more than five times as likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and almost six times as likely to develop sleep apnoea.

For those with a BMI of 35 to 40, the risk of Type 2 diabetes was almost nine times higher, and 12 times higher for sleep apnoea.



People with severe obesity (BMI of 40 to 45) were 12 times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and had a risk of sleep apnoea that was 22 times greater.

The results also showed that increasing weight was linked to higher risk of high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat and dyslipidaemia (abnormal levels of cholesterol and other fats in the blood).



**The more obese people are, the higher their risk of serious disease, research finds. Credit: PA**

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

To what degree?

People with a BMI of 40 to 45 had triple the risk of heart failure, high blood pressure, and dyslipidaemia.

This BMI was also linked to a 50% higher risk of dying prematurely from any cause compared to people of a normal weight.

The research found that the risk of developing serious health problems was highly dependent on whether or not people already had issues at the start of the study.

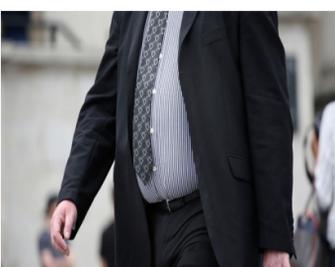
For example, having high blood pressure at the start of the study was strongly associated with developing dyslipidaemia, chronic kidney disease and Type 2 diabetes.

How extensive was the research?

Researchers looked at health, death and BMI data from more than 2.8 million adults between January 2000 and July 2018 from the UK Clinical Practice Research Datalink.

This was linked with hospital data to estimate the risk for serious health problems.

What do the report authors highlight from their work?



**Obesity has almost tripled worldwide over the past 30 years. Credit: PA**

Author Christiane Haase, from Novo Nordisk in Denmark, which funded the study, said: "The health risks linked with having excess body weight are particularly high for Type 2 diabetes and sleep apnoea.

"With the number of people living with obesity almost tripling worldwide over the past 30 years (105 million people in 1975 to 650 million in 2016), our findings have serious implications for public health."

The research was presented as a poster at the conference and was peer-reviewed by the conference selection committee. Naveed Sattar, professor of metabolic medicine at the University of Glasgow, said: "This study serves to remind us, once again, how damaging obesity is given its strong associations with a range of conditions beyond diabetes and heart disease.

"The obesity links to heart failure are becoming more widely appreciated and links to sleep apnoea, hypertension and abnormal blood fats are well known.

"Like most observational BMI studies using routine health data, there are limitations to this work but I suspect some risks are in fact underestimated.

"The health profession needs to up its game in helping people improve their weight (there are good signs that it is doing so) as it is unlikely that the food environment is going to drastically improve anytime soon."



**Who else has reacted to the report findings?**

Dr Emily Burns, head of research communications at Diabetes UK, said: "It's important to note the significantly increased risk of Type 2 diabetes suggested by this research – while alarming – was specifically seen in people with a very high BMI of over 40, which only accounts for 2% of men and 5% of women in England.

"That said, we know that being overweight increases your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

"Losing weight can be tough, but programmes such as NHS England's Diabetes Prevention Programme are there to help people at high risk, and the Diabetes UK website has ideas for healthy meals, ingredient swaps and tips on getting active too."

Louis Levy, head of nutrition science at Public Health England (PHE), said: "Most countries are facing increasing levels of obesity, putting pressure on both individuals' health and national health and social care systems.

"To reverse what's been decades in the making needs sustained action across the drivers of poor diets and weight gain.

"We're working with industry to make food healthier, we've produced guidance for councils on planning healthier towns and we've delivered campaigns encouraging people to choose healthier food and lead healthier lives." (Courtesy <https://www.itv.com/news>)

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*"I am a strong advocate of promoting health and wellness to my patients, especially in the pediatric population. I want to make a difference and have a strong, healthy impact on my patients' lives."*

-Jennifer Lai, M.D.

Dr. Lai is a board-certified pediatrician who earned her medical degree from The University of Texas School of Medicine in San Antonio and completed her pediatric internship and residency at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Her special clinical interests include General Pediatrics, caring for newborns, and managing autism, and childhood obesity. She cares for young patients at Kelsey-Seybold's Spring Medical and Diagnostic Center.

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**Thousands Of Central American Migrants In Mexico Are In Need Of Assistance**

**Pope Sends Aid To Migrants Stranded At The U.S. Border**



**Pope Francis**

**Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor**

Pope Francis has donated 500,000 dollars to assist migrants in Mexico. The funds, from the Peter's Pence collections, will be distributed among 27 projects promoted by sixteen Mexican dioceses and religious congregations, which requested assistance in continuing to provide food, lodging, and basic necessities to the migrants.

**US border closed**

According to a statement from Peter's Pence, "In recent months, thousands of migrants have arrived in Mexico, having travelled more than 4,000 kilometres on foot and with makeshift vehicles from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Men and women, often with young children, flee poverty and violence, hoping for a better future in the United States. However, the US border remains closed to them."

**Diminished aid and media coverage**

In particular, the aid is intended to assist the more than 75,000 people who arrived in Mexico in 2018, in six migrant caravans. "All these people were stranded, unable to enter the United States, without a home or livelihood", the statement reads. "The Catholic Church hosts thousands of them in hotels within the dioceses or religious congregations, providing basic necessities, from housing to clothing".

Although a great deal of attention was focused on the caravans at the time, the Peter's Pence statement notes that "media coverage of this emergency has been decreasing, and as a result, aid to migrants by the government and private individuals has also decreased".



**Migrants in Tijuana encamped by the wall marking the border with the United States (ANSA)**

**Transparent use of donations**

The statement from Peter's Pence insists that "a regulated and transparent use of the resources, which must be accounted for, is required before the aid is assigned". It notes that thirteen projects have already been approved, with another fourteen currently

being evaluated.

"Thanks to these projects", the statement concludes, "and thanks to Christian charity and solidarity, the Mexican Bishops hope to be able to continue helping our migrant brothers and sisters". (Courtesy <https://www.vaticannews.va>) To contribute to the projects with your donations, please click on the following link: <http://www.peter-spence.va/en/dona.html>

**Related**

**300,000 Migrants Entered Mexico Bound for the US in 2019, Including From Africa, Asia**

About 300,000 migrants from around the globe entered Mexico with the intention of illegally crossing into the United States in the first three months of 2019, according to Mexican officials.

The country's Interior Secretary Olga Sánchez Cordero said at a press conference on April 23 that Mexico had seen an increase in migrants from Honduras and a smaller number from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Cuba along with African and Asian nations, reported local news website Mexico News Daily.



Sánchez Cordero described this migration flow as "unprecedented and unusual" and added that "six caravans madrecitas" or little mother caravans that have around 2,000 people in each entering Mexico in recent months.

"It's estimated that during the first three months of the year, more than 300,000 migrants have transited through Mexico to enter the United States illegally," Sánchez Cordero said, reported radio station KJZZ.

"There's a change in the flow of migrants who are entering our country." Sánchez Cordero did not specify how it was determined that these migrants wanted to

enter the United States illegally.

On April 18, an Epoch Times reporter who was at the border reported that Border Patrol agents had arrested seven Chinese, one Mexican, and one El Salvadoran minor who crossed the border illegally at Mission, Texas.

**CharlotteCuthbertson@charlottecuthbo**

Out with #BorderPatrol in Mission, Texas, and just caught 7 Chinese, 1 Mexican, and 1 El Salvadoran minor. All trying to evade capture. Chinese man said he paid \$15k for the whole package (flights to Mexico, smuggled across border)

860

7:54 AM - Apr 18, 2019. 1,042 people are talking about this



**CharlotteCuthbertson@charlottecuthbo**

The Chinese man said he plans to claim asylum from persecution, but couldn't say why he didn't just fly straight into the United States and do that. He said a friend in Beijing put him in contact with a smuggler. #borderpatrol Mission, Texas. @rgv3307

179

8:10 AM - Apr 18, 2019

Twitter Ads info and privacy 141 people are talking about this

Moreover, Foreign Affairs Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said that they were not detaining migrants in response to pressure from the United States, adding that Mexico's immigration policy has not changed and will not change.

Mexican authorities had detained 371 migrants including women and children in Mapastepec, Chiapas, on April 22, but Sánchez Cordero said this occurred because the

migrants were acting aggressively toward National Immigration Institute (INM) personnel, reported Mexico News Daily.

The increase of migrants trying to enter the United States is backed up by Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) data.



Earlier this month, CBP said agents encountered over 103,000 individuals on the southwestern border in the month of March. Of those, 92,000 were Border Patrol apprehensions—which is an increase of 35 percent compared to February.

Thousands of migrant ride on the rooftops of freight trains headed to the U.S. The agency also said that for the first half of the 2019 fiscal year, agents arrested over 385,000 illegal aliens at the southwest border, which is more than double the apprehensions during the same period last fiscal year.

In a recent press conference, acting Department of Homeland Security chief, Kevin McAleenan said the Border Patrol has identified over 3,000 fraudulent family unit cases in the past six months.

"It's very clear that the cartel and smugglers know the weaknesses in our laws. They know that family units and unaccompanied children will be released with no consequences for their illegal entries," McAleenan said on April 17 during his tour at McAllen, Texas, reported KVEO.

He said illegal aliens are going to great lengths to seek asylum in the United States, by engaging in what he called child recycling rings, reported Texas Public Radio. "The same child is brought across the border with an adult multiple times to try and gain that release that family units are required under court order," McAleenan said

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