

NEWS FROM THE ULSTER COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER

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Ulster County Comptroller Releases Snapshot Report on Opioid Fatalities and Settlement Funding

Kingston, NY (December 9, 2022) – The Ulster County Comptroller has released a snapshot on the Opioid settlement funds received by Ulster County. Ulster County resident deaths from opioid overdose has increased 407% since 2014 and 11% between 2020 and 2021.

The Opioid Settlements are meant to provide funding to address the issues associated with the opioid crisis. To date the County has received \$1.3 million of an expected \$1.47 million in Opioid Settlement Funds in 2022. The funds are a result of settlements negotiated by Attorney General Letitia James in four separate cases. These funds are the beginning of a series of payments expected for settlements with distributors, manufacturers, and pharmacies. The Distributors settlement will continue for the next 16 years. The Janssen Pharmaceutical settlement for the next six years. The County also received one-time payments from Allergan Pharmaceutical and one Distributors' settlement. A settlement from Endo Pharmaceutical is anticipated by year end. A portion of the settlement funds received must be used for approved use that include treatment, prevention, training, research and first responder support. Additional settlements are expected with pharmacies such as CVS, Rite Aid, and Walgreens as well as Purdue Pharma.

These funds are much needed as Ulster County residents face substantial increases in opioid overdoses. In data collected from Ulster County Medical Examiner records, opioid deaths have increased 407% since 2014. Ulster County has numerous programs both active and proposed to address the opioid epidemic including the Sheriff's Office ORACLE program, a re-established Mental Health Department, providing mental health services in schools and plans for a crisis stabilization center and three respite houses.

"The Comptroller's Office recommends that 100% of the funds received from settlement agreements be dedicated to the prevention and treatment of opioids, even those funds that are unrestricted, given the frightening increase in opioid deaths in Ulster County," said Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher. "Our office will continue to monitor the receipt of these revenues and the expenditures associated with them going forward. The opioid epidemic continues to take a serious financial toll on Ulster County government, business, and families. These first settlement proceeds are but a fraction of the human toll our community has suffered."

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Report available at: <https://comptroller.ulstercountyny.gov/audit-reports/comptrollers-opioid-snapshot>