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8 COYOTE VALLEY BAND OF POMO INDIANS

9 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
10 FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

11 COYOTE VALLEY BAND OF POMO )  
12 INDIANS, )  
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Plaintiff,

vs.

MCKESSON CORPORATION;  
CARDINAL HEALTH, INC.;  
AMERISOURCEBERGEN CORPORATION;  
CVS HEALTH CORPORATION;  
WALGREENS BOOTS ALLIANCE, INC.;  
WAL-MART STORES, INC.,  
PURDUE PHARMA L.P.;  
PURDUE PHARMA, INC.;  
THE PURDUE FREDERICK COMPANY, INC.;  
TEVA PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIES,  
LTD.;  
TEVA PHARMACEUTICALS USA, INC.;  
CEPHALON, INC.;  
JOHNSON & JOHNSON;  
JANSSEN PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.;  
ORTHO-MCNEIL-JANSSEN  
PHARMACEUTICALS, INC. n/k/a JANSSEN  
PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.;

Case No.: CGC-18-563933

- COMPLAINT FOR:
- 1. Nuisance;
  - 2. Negligence & Gross Negligence;
  - 3. Unjust Enrichment;
  - 4. Common Law Fraud; and
  - 5. Civil Conspiracy

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

1 JANSSEN PHARMACEUTICA INC. n/k/a )  
JANSSEN PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.; ENDO )  
2 HEALTH SOLUTIONS INC.; )  
3 ENDO PHARMACEUTICALS, INC.; )  
4 ALLERGAN PLC f/k/a ACTAVIS PLC; )  
5 WATSON PHARMACEUTICALS, INC. n/k/a )  
ACTAVIS, INC.; )  
6 WATSON LABORATORIES, INC.; )  
7 ACTAVIS LLC; ACTAVIS PHARMA, INC. )  
f/k/a WATSON PHARMA, INC.; )  
8 MALLINCKRODT, PLC d/b/a )  
9 MALLINCKRODT PHARMACEUTICALS, )  
10 DOES 1 THROUGH 100, INCLUSIVE, )

11 Defendants.

12  
13  
14 Plaintiff COYOTE VALLEY BAND OF POMO INDIANS complains and alleges as  
15 follows:

16 1. An epidemic of prescription opioid abuse is devastating the United States,  
17 particularly Indian country, that has caused the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians (hereinafter  
18 “Coyote Valley” or “Tribe”) substantial loss of resources, economic damages, addiction, disability,  
19 to members, children, and grandchildren of Coyote Valley, as well as the health and welfare of the  
20 Tribe. This epidemic has been building for years, and it has been intentionally concealed,  
21 minimized, and otherwise misrepresented by the Defendants who were motivated to keep it going  
22 and to make it larger for the purpose of making billions of dollars in profits, all to the detriment of  
23 the Tribe and others.  
24

25 2. In the Tribe, as in the United States, prescription opioids are deadlier and more  
26 devastating than any prescription drug or non-prescription drug, including heroin. Prescription  
27 opioids kill almost twice as many people in the United States as heroin. Prescription opioids and  
28 related drug overdose deaths surpass car accident deaths in the U.S., as well as deaths from breast

1 cancer. The devastation to the Tribe is pervasive. Child welfare costs associated with opioid-  
2 addicted parents have skyrocketed. The Tribe's medical costs are overwhelming due to the costs of  
3 the opioid epidemic. Foster care costs have substantially increased. Education and addiction therapy  
4 costs have multiplied. The Tribe's funding for health and welfare has been imperiled. It is no  
5 wonder that in 2016, the U.S. Surgeon General warned that the "prescription opioid epidemic that is  
6 sweeping across the U.S. has hit Indian country particularly hard."

8         3. This epidemic and its consequences could have been, and should have been,  
9 prevented by the opioid delivery industry created by the Defendants, especially the distribution  
10 network that controls delivery to consumers of opioid prescription drugs and even illegal sale of  
11 prescription opioid drugs through what is called opioid diversion. Instead of acting with reasonable  
12 care and in a truthful manner, the Defendants blindly stoked the engine of prescription opioid  
13 distribution in order to profit in the billions of dollars by flooding Coyote Valley and other federally  
14 recognized Indian and Alaskan Native tribal communities with prescription opioids. These facts and  
15 others as alleged in this Complaint have only recently come to light, despite Defendants' efforts,  
16 and now is the time for the Tribe to file this Complaint to seek remedies for the devastation and  
17 damages it has incurred.

19         4. The prescription drug distribution industry is supposed to serve as a "check" in the  
20 drug delivery system, by securing and monitoring opioids at every step of the stream of commerce,  
21 protecting the opioids from theft, misuse, and diversion, and by implementing "red flags" to stop  
22 suspicious or unusual orders by downstream pharmacies, doctors, clinics, or patients. Defendants  
23 woefully failed in this duty, instead consciously ignoring known or knowable problems and data in  
24 their supply chains.

26         5. Defendants, individually and in conspiracy with each other or some of the other  
27 Defendants, intentionally and negligently created conditions in which vast amounts of opioids have  
28 flowed freely from drug manufacturers to innocent patients who became addicted, to opioid abusers,

1 and even to illicit drug dealers—with distributors regularly fulfilling suspicious orders from  
2 pharmacies and clinics, who were economically incentivized to ignore “red flags” at the point of  
3 sale and before dispensing the pills.

4           6. Defendants’ wrongful conduct has allowed millions of opioid pills to be diverted  
5 from legitimate channels of distribution into the illicit black market in quantities that have fueled  
6 the opioid epidemic affecting the Tribe. Acting against their common law and statutory duties,  
7 Defendants have created an environment in which opioid diversion is rampant. As a result,  
8 unknowing patients and unauthorized opioid users in and around the Tribe have ready access to  
9 illicit sources of diverted opioids.  
10

11           7. For years Defendants and their agents have had the ability to substantially reduce the  
12 death toll and adverse economic consequences of opioid diversion, but the Defendants pursued  
13 corporate revenues instead. All the Defendants in this action share responsibility for perpetuating  
14 the epidemic.  
15

16           8. Defendants have foreseeably caused damages to the Tribe including the costs of  
17 providing: (a) medical care, additional therapeutic and prescription drug purchases, and other  
18 treatments for patients suffering from opioid-related addiction or disease, including overdoses and  
19 deaths; (b) counseling and rehabilitation services; (c) treatment of infants born with opioid-related  
20 medical conditions; (d) welfare and foster care for children whose parents suffer from opioid-related  
21 disability or incapacitation; and (e) law enforcement and public safety relating to the opioid  
22 epidemic within the Tribe. The Tribe has also suffered substantial damages relating to the lost  
23 productivity of Coyote Valley Tribal Members, as well as increased administrative costs.  
24

25           9. The Tribe brings this civil action for injunctive relief, compensatory damages,  
26 statutory damages, punitive damages, and any other relief allowed by law against the Defendant  
27 opioid drug distributors and retailers that, by their actions, knowingly or negligently have  
28 distributed and dispensed prescription opioid drugs to and within the economic proximity of the

1 Tribe in a manner that foreseeably injured, and continues to injure, the Tribe and its members.

2 **PARTIES**

3 10. The Plaintiff, Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, is a federally recognized  
4 sovereign Indian tribe, governed by the Document Embodying the Laws, Customs and Traditions of  
5 the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians (“Tribal Constitution”) and the laws of the Tribe, with its  
6 principal location in Redwood Valley, California in close proximity to larger towns, including  
7 Ukiah and Willits, California. The Tribe exercises inherent sovereign governmental authority within  
8 the Tribe’s Indian Lands and on behalf of the health and welfare of the Tribe and its members  
9 (“Tribal Members”), descendant children, and grandchildren and other inhabitants of the Tribe’s  
10 Indian Lands. The Tribe’s reservation lands are located in Mendocino County, California. Members  
11 of the Tribe are affected by the actions and conduct of the Defendants both directed at or near the  
12 Tribe’s Indian Lands, as well as areas outside of the Tribe’s Indian Lands. Tribal Members live  
13 both on and off the Tribe’s Indian Lands.  
14  
15

16 11. This action is brought by the Tribe in the exercise of its authority as a sovereign  
17 government and on behalf of the Tribe in its proprietary capacity and under its *parens patriae*  
18 authority in the public interest to protect the health, safety, and welfare of all Coyote Valley Tribal  
19 Members as well as the non-Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian Lands to stop the growing  
20 prescription opioid epidemic within the Tribe, as well as to recover damages and seek other redress  
21 for harm caused by Defendants’ improper, wrongful, fraudulent, and tortious sales, distribution,  
22 dispensing, and reporting practices relating to prescription opioids. Defendants’ actions have caused  
23 and continue to cause a crisis that threatens the health, safety, and welfare of the Tribe.  
24

25 12. McKesson Corporation (“McKesson”) is a publicly traded company headquartered  
26 in San Francisco, California and incorporated under the laws of Delaware. During all relevant  
27 times, McKesson has caused to be distributed substantial amounts of prescription opioids to  
28 providers and retailers near the Tribe and Tribal Members. McKesson has taken actions that have

1 harmed the Tribe, Tribal Members, and the non-Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian Lands and  
2 it has purposefully availed itself of the advantages of conducting business within the economic  
3 proximity of the Tribe.

4           13. Cardinal Health, Inc. (“Cardinal”) is a publicly-traded company headquartered in  
5 Ohio and incorporated under the laws of Ohio. During all relevant times, Cardinal has distributed  
6 substantial amounts of prescription opioids to providers and retailers located near the Tribe.  
7 Cardinal has taken actions that have harmed the Tribe, Tribal Members, and the non-Tribal Member  
8 inhabitants of its Indian Lands and it has purposefully availed itself of the advantages of conducting  
9 business within the economic proximity of the Tribe.  
10

11           14. AmerisourceBergen Corporation is a publicly-traded company headquartered in  
12 Pennsylvania and incorporated under the laws of Delaware. During all relevant times,  
13 AmerisourceBergen has distributed substantial amounts of prescription opioids to providers and  
14 retailers located near the Tribe. AmerisourceBergen has taken actions that have harmed the Tribe,  
15 Tribal Members, and the non-Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian Lands and it has purposefully  
16 availed itself of the advantages of conducting business within the economic proximity of the Tribe.  
17

18           15. McKesson, Cardinal, and AmerisourceBergen are collectively referred to hereinafter  
19 as “Distributor Defendants.”  
20

21           16. CVS Health is a publicly-traded Delaware corporation with its principal place of  
22 business in Rhode Island. During all relevant times, CVS Health has sold and continues to sell  
23 prescription opioids at locations near the Tribe, including in close proximity to hospitals, clinics and  
24 other health care facilities serving Tribal Members. CVS Health has taken actions that have harmed  
25 the Tribe, Tribal Members, and the non-Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian Lands and it has  
26 purposefully availed itself of the advantages of conducting business within the economic proximity  
27 of the Tribe.  
28

1           17.     Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc., a/k/a Walgreen Co. (“Walgreens”) is a publicly-  
2 traded Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Illinois. At all relevant times,  
3 Walgreens has sold and continues to sell prescription opioids at locations near the Tribe, including  
4 those in close proximity to the hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities serving the Tribe’s  
5 members. Walgreens has taken actions that have harmed the Tribe, Tribal Members, and the non-  
6 Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian Lands and it has purposefully availed itself of the  
7 advantages of conducting business within the economic proximity of the Tribe.  
8

9           18.     Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (“Wal-Mart”) is a publicly-traded Delaware corporation with  
10 its principal place of business in Arkansas. At all relevant times, Wal-Mart has sold and continues  
11 to sell prescription opioids at locations near the Tribe, including in close proximity to hospitals,  
12 clinics and other healthcare facilities serving the Tribe’s members. Wal-Mart has taken actions that  
13 have harmed the Tribe, Tribal Members, and the non-Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian Lands  
14 and it has purposefully availed itself of the advantages of conducting business within the economic  
15 proximity of the Tribe.  
16

17           19.     CVS Health, Walgreens, and Wal-Mart are collectively referred to hereinafter as the  
18 “Pharmacy Defendants.”

19           20.     Purdue Pharma L.P. is a limited partnership organized under the laws of Delaware.  
20 Purdue Pharma Inc. is a New York corporation with its principal place of business in Stamford,  
21 Connecticut, and The Purdue Frederick Company is a Delaware corporation with its principal place  
22 of business in Stamford, Connecticut (collectively, “Purdue”). Purdue manufactures, promotes,  
23 sells, and distributes opioids such as OxyContin, MS Contin, Dilaudid/Dilaudid HP, Butrans,  
24 Hysingla ER, and Targiniq ER in the U.S. and California. OxyContin is Purdue’s best-selling  
25 opioid. Since 2009, Purdue’s annual sales of OxyContin have fluctuated between \$2.47 billion and  
26 \$2.99 billion, up four-fold from its 2006 sales of \$800 million. OxyContin constitutes roughly 30%  
27 of the entire market for analgesic drugs (painkillers).  
28

1           21.     Cephalon, Inc. (“Cephalon”) is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of  
2 business in Frazer, Pennsylvania. Cephalon manufactures, promotes, sells, and distributes opioids  
3 such as Actiq and Fentora in the U.S. and California. Actiq and Fentora have been approved by the  
4 FDA only for the “management of breakthrough cancer pain in patients 16 years of age and older  
5 who are already receiving and who are tolerant to opioid therapy for their underlying persistent  
6 cancer pain.” In 2008, Cephalon pled guilty to a criminal violation of the Federal Food, Drug and  
7 Cosmetic Act for its misleading promotion of Actiq and two other drugs and agreed to pay \$425  
8 million.  
9

10           22.     Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Ltd. (“Teva Ltd.”) is an Israeli corporation with its  
11 principal place of business in Petah Tikva, Israel. In 2011, Teva Ltd. acquired Cephalon. Teva  
12 Pharmaceuticals Usa, Inc. (“Teva USA”) is a wholly- owned subsidiary of Teva Ltd. and is a  
13 Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in Pennsylvania. Teva USA acquired  
14 Cephalon in October 2011.  
15

16           23.     Teva Ltd., Teva USA, and Cephalon collaborate to market and sell Cephalon  
17 products in the U.S. Teva Ltd. conducts all sales and marketing activities for Cephalon in the U.S.  
18 through Teva USA. Teva Ltd. and Teva USA publicize Actiq and Fentora as Teva products. Teva  
19 USA sells all former Cephalon branded products through its “specialty medicines” division. The  
20 FDA-approved prescribing information and medication guide, which is distributed with Cephalon  
21 opioids marketed and sold in California, discloses that the guide was submitted by Teva USA, and  
22 directs physicians to contact Teva USA to report adverse events. Teva Ltd. has directed Cephalon to  
23 disclose that it is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Teva Ltd. on prescription savings cards distributed  
24 in California, indicating Teva Ltd. would be responsible for covering certain co-pay costs. All of  
25 Cephalon’s promotional websites, including those for Actiq and Fentora, prominently display Teva  
26 Ltd.’s logo. Teva Ltd.’s financial reports list Cephalon’s and Teva USA’s sales as its own. Through  
27  
28



1 interrelated operations like these, Teva Ltd. operates in California and the rest of the U.S. through  
2 its subsidiaries Cephalon and Teva USA. The U.S. is the largest of Teva Ltd.'s global markets,  
3 representing 53% of its global revenue in 2015, and, were it not for the existence of Teva USA and  
4 Cephalon, Inc., Teva Ltd. would conduct those companies' business in the United States itself.  
5 Upon information and belief, Teva Ltd. directs the business practices of Cephalon and Teva USA,  
6 and their profits inure to the benefit of Teva Ltd. as controlling shareholder. (Teva Ltd., Teva USA,  
7 and Cephalon, Inc. are hereinafter collectively referred to as "Cephalon.")  
8

9         24. Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is a Pennsylvania corporation with its principal place  
10 of business in Titusville, New Jersey, and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson  
11 (J&J), a New Jersey corporation with its principal place of business in New Brunswick, New Jersey.  
12 Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., now known as Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., is a  
13 Pennsylvania corporation with its principal place of business in Titusville, New Jersey. Janssen  
14 Pharmaceutica Inc., now known as Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., is a Pennsylvania corporation  
15 with its principal place of business in Titusville, New Jersey. J&J is the only company that owns  
16 more than 10% of Janssen Pharmaceuticals' stock, and corresponds with the FDA regarding  
17 Janssen's products. Upon information and belief, J&J controls the sale and development of Janssen  
18 Pharmaceuticals' drugs and Janssen's profits inure to J&J's benefit. (Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.,  
19 Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Janssen Pharmaceutica, Inc., and J&J hereinafter are  
20 collectively referred to as "Janssen."). Janssen manufactures, promotes, sells, and distributes drugs  
21 in the U.S. and California, including the opioid Duragesic. Before 2009, Duragesic accounted for at  
22 least \$1 billion in annual sales. Until January 2015, Janssen developed, marketed, and sold the  
23 opioids Nucynta and Nucynta ER. Together, Nucynta and Nucynta ER accounted for \$172 million  
24 in sales in 2014.  
25  
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1           25.     Endo Health Solutions Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of  
2 business in Malvern, Pennsylvania. Endo Pharmaceuticals Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of  
3 Endo Health Solutions Inc. and is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business in  
4 Malvern, Pennsylvania. (Endo Health Solutions Inc. and Endo Pharmaceuticals Inc. hereinafter are  
5 collectively referred to as “Endo.”) Endo develops, markets, and sells prescription drugs, including  
6 the opioids Opana/Opana ER, Percodan, Percocet, and Zydone, in the U.S. and California. Opioids  
7 made up roughly \$403 million of Endo’s overall revenues of \$3 billion in 2012. Opana ER yielded  
8 \$1.15 billion in revenue from 2010 and 2013, and it accounted for 10% of Endo’s total revenue in  
9 2012. Endo also manufactures and sells generic opioids such as oxycodone, oxymorphone,  
10 hydromorphone, and hydrocodone products in the U.S. and California, by itself and through its  
11 subsidiary, Qualitest Pharmaceuticals, Inc.  
12

13  
14           26.     Allergan PLC is a public limited company incorporated in Ireland with its principal  
15 place of business in Dublin, Ireland. Actavis PLC acquired Allergan PLC in March 2015, and the  
16 combined company changed its name to Allergan PLC in January 2013. Before that, Watson  
17 Pharmaceuticals, Inc. acquired Actavis, Inc. in October 2012, and the combined company changed  
18 its name to Actavis, Inc. as of January 2013, later to Actavis PLC in October 2013. Watson  
19 Laboratories, Inc. is a Nevada corporation with its principal place of business in Corona, California,  
20 and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Allergan PLC (f/k/a Actavis, Inc. f/k/a Watson  
21 Pharmaceuticals, Inc.). Actavis Pharma, Inc. (f/k/a Actavis, Inc.) is a Delaware corporation with its  
22 principal place of business in New Jersey and was formerly known as Watson Pharma, Inc. Actavis  
23 LLC is a Delaware limited liability company with its principal place of business in Parsippany, New  
24 Jersey. Each of these defendants is owned by Allergan PLC, which uses them to market and sell its  
25 drugs in the United States. Upon information and belief, Allergan PLC exercises control over and  
26 derives financial benefit from the marketing, sales, and profits of Allergan/Actavis products.  
27  
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1 (Allergan PLC, Actavis PLC, Actavis, Inc., Actavis LLC, Actavis Pharma, Inc., Watson  
2 Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Watson Pharma, Inc., and Watson Laboratories, Inc. hereinafter are referred  
3 to collectively as “Actavis.”) Actavis manufactures, promotes, sells, and distributes opioids,  
4 including the branded drugs Kadian and Norco, a generic version of Kadian, and generic versions of  
5 Duragesic and Opana, in the U.S. and California. Actavis acquired the rights to Kadian from King  
6 Pharmaceuticals, Inc. on December 30, 2008, and began marketing Kadian in 2009.

8 27. Mallinckrodt, PLC, an alien company doing business as Mallinckrodt  
9 Pharmaceuticals (“Mallinckrodt”) with its principal place of business in the United States in St.  
10 Louis, Missouri, is one of the largest manufacturers of the generic opioid oxycodone.

11 28. Purdue, Cephalon, Janssen, Endo, Actavis, and Mallinckrodt are collectively referred  
12 to hereinafter as the “Pharmaceutical Defendants.”

14 29. The Plaintiff presently lacks information sufficient to specifically identify the true  
15 names or capacities, whether individual, corporate or otherwise, of the Defendants sued herein  
16 under the fictitious names DOES 1 through 100 inclusive. The Plaintiff will amend this Complaint  
17 to show their true names and capacities if and when they are ascertained. The Plaintiff is informed  
18 and believes, and on such information and belief alleges, that each of the Defendants named as a  
19 DOE is responsible in some manner for the events and occurrences alleged in this Complaint and is  
20 liable for the relief sought herein.

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25 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

26 30. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action because the Defendants’  
27 actions were in violation California law.

1           31. Defendants engaged in activities and conduct that took place near, and had direct  
2 impacts on, land that constitutes Indian Lands of the Tribe.

3           32. The Tribe brings this action against the Defendants based on Defendants' actions  
4 that have harmed the Tribe, Tribal Members, and the non-Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian  
5 Lands and it the Defendants have purposefully availed themselves of the advantages of conducting  
6 business within the economic proximity of the Tribe.

7           33. The Tribe also brings this action against the Defendants for their wrongful conduct  
8 that has created a nuisance within the Tribe's Indian Lands and an ongoing threat to the political  
9 integrity, economic security, health and welfare of the Tribe. Defendants have substantial contacts  
10 with the the Tribe, Tribal Members, and the non-Tribal Member inhabitants of its Indian Lands.

11           34. Defendants have purposefully availed themselves of business opportunities within  
12 the economic proximity of the Tribe's Indian Lands.

13           35. Defendants' conduct has caused and is causing damages to the Tribe's proprietary  
14 and sovereign interests by imposing significant costs on the Tribe's health and welfare funding and  
15 system. In addition, Defendants' conduct has caused decreased economic productivity of Tribal  
16 Members and non-Tribal Member inhabitants of the Tribe's Indian Lands (such as Tribal member  
17 spouses and descendants) and employees of the Tribe or wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe and  
18 has harmed the long-term health and welfare of the Tribal Members and non-Tribal Member  
19 inhabitants of the Tribe's Indian Lands (such as Tribal member spouses and descendants) and  
20 employees of the Tribe or wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe.

21           36. Defendants' conduct has caused and is causing a crisis within the Tribe that threatens  
22 the health, welfare, economic security and political integrity of the Tribe and all its members.  
23 Because of Defendants' actions, certain members of the Tribe have become addicted to prescription  
24 opioid drugs, causing severe injury, requiring rehabilitation and medical treatment for substance  
25 abuse disorder, causing children to be born addicted to prescription opioids and other controlled  
26  
27  
28



1 condition and when used properly. But when misused or abused, they can cause serious harm,  
2 including addiction, overdose, and death.”

3         42. Prescription opioids with the highest potential for addiction are categorized under  
4 Schedule II of the Controlled Substances Act. They include non-synthetic derivatives of the opium  
5 poppy (such as codeine and morphine, which are also called “opiates”), partially synthetic  
6 derivatives (such as hydrocodone and oxycodone), or fully synthetic derivatives (such as fentanyl  
7 and methadone).

9         43. Before the epidemic of Defendants’ prescription opioids, the generally accepted  
10 standard of medical practice was that opioids should only be used short-term for acute pain, pain  
11 relating to recovery from surgery, or for cancer or palliative (end-of-life) care. Due to the lack of  
12 evidence that opioids improved patients’ ability to overcome pain and function, coupled with  
13 evidence of greater pain complaints as patients developed tolerance to opioids over time and the  
14 serious risk of addiction and other side effects, the use of opioids for chronic pain was discouraged  
15 or prohibited. As a result, doctors generally did not prescribe opioids for chronic pain.

17         44. To establish and exploit the lucrative market of chronic pain patients, each  
18 Defendant developed a well-funded, sophisticated, and deceptive marketing and/or distribution  
19 scheme targeted at consumers and physicians. Defendants used direct marketing, as well as veiled  
20 advertising by seemingly independent third parties to spread false and deceptive statements about  
21 the risks and benefits of long-term opioid use—statements that created the “new” market for  
22 prescription opioids, upended the standard medical practice, and benefited other Defendants and  
23 opioid manufacturers. These statements were unsupported by and contrary to the scientific  
24 evidence. These statements were also contrary to pronouncements by and guidance from the FDA  
25 and CDC based on that evidence. They also targeted susceptible prescribers and vulnerable patient  
26 populations, including that of the Tribe.  
27  
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1           45. Defendants spread their false and deceptive statements by marketing their branded  
2 opioids directly to doctors and residents of California. Defendants also deployed seemingly  
3 unbiased and independent third parties that they controlled to spread their false and deceptive  
4 statements about the risks and benefits of opioids for the treatment of chronic pain throughout the  
5 Tribe.

6           46. Defendants' direct and branded ads deceptively portrayed the benefits of opioids for  
7 chronic pain. For example, Endo distributed and made available on its website [opana.com](http://opana.com) a  
8 pamphlet promoting Opana ER with photographs depicting patients with physically demanding  
9 jobs, misleadingly implying that the drug would provide long-term pain-relief and functional  
10 improvement. Purdue ran a series of ads, called "Pain Vignettes," for OxyContin that featured  
11 chronic pain patients and recommended OxyContin for each. One ad described a "54-year-old  
12 writer with osteoarthritis of the hands" and implied that OxyContin would help the writer work  
13 more effectively. Endo and Purdue agreed in 2015-16 to stop these particularly misleading  
14 representations in New York, but continued to disseminate them in California.  
15  
16

17           47. Defendants also promoted the use of opioids for chronic pain through "detailers" —  
18 sophisticated and specially trained sales representatives who visited individual doctors and medical  
19 staff, and fomented small-group speaker programs. In 2014, for instance, Defendants spent almost  
20 \$200 million on detailing branded opioids to doctors.  
21

22           48. The FDA has cited at least one Defendant for deceptive promotions by its detailers  
23 and direct-to-physician marketing. In 2010 an FDA-mandated "Dear Doctor" letter required  
24 Actavis to inform doctors that "Actavis sales representatives distributed . . . promotional materials  
25 that . . . omitted and minimized serious risks associated with [Kadian]," including the risk of  
26 "[m]isuse, [a]buse, and [d]iversion of [o]pioids" and, specifically, the risk that "[o]pioid[s] have the  
27 potential for being abused and are sought by drug abusers and people with addiction disorders and  
28 are subject to criminal diversion."

1           49. Defendants invited doctors to participate, for payment and other remuneration, on  
2 and in speakers' bureaus and programs paid for by Defendants. These speaker programs were  
3 designed to provide incentives for doctors to prescribe opioids, including recognition and  
4 compensation for being selected as speakers. These speakers give the false impression that they are  
5 providing unbiased and medically accurate presentations when they are, in fact, presenting a script  
6 prepared by Defendants. On information and belief, these presentations conveyed misleading  
7 information, omitted material information, and failed to correct Defendants' prior  
8 misrepresentations about the risks and benefits of opioids.  
9

10           50. Defendants' detailing to doctors was highly effective in the national proliferation of  
11 prescription opioids. Defendants used sophisticated data mining and intelligence to track and  
12 understand the rates of initial prescribing and renewal by individual doctor, allowing specific and  
13 individual targeting, customizing, and monitoring of their marketing.  
14

15           51. Defendants have had unified marketing plans and strategies from state to state,  
16 including California. This unified approach ensures that Defendants' messages were and are  
17 consistent and effective across all their marketing efforts.  
18

19           52. Defendants deceptively marketed opioids in California through unbranded  
20 advertising that promoted opioid use generally yet was silent as to a specific opioid. This  
21 advertising was ostensibly created and disseminated by independent third parties, but funded,  
22 directed, coordinated, edited, and distributed, in part or whole, by Defendants and their public  
23 relations firms and agents.  
24

25           53. Defendants used putative third-party, unbranded advertising to avoid regulatory  
26 scrutiny as such advertising is not submitted to or reviewed by the FDA. Defendants used third-  
27 party, unbranded advertising to create the false appearance that the deceptive messages came from  
28 an independent and objective source.



1           54. Defendants’ deceptive unbranded marketing also contradicted their branded  
2 materials reviewed by the FDA.

3           55. Defendants marketed opioids through a small circle of doctors who were vetted,  
4 selected, funded, and promoted by Defendants because their public positions supported the use of  
5 prescription opioids to treat chronic pain. These doctors became known as “key opinion leaders” or  
6 “KOLs.” Defendants paid KOLs to serve in a number of doctor-facing and public-facing capacities,  
7 all designed to promote a pro-opioid message and to promote the opioid industry pipeline, from  
8 manufacture to distribution to retail.  
9

10           56. Defendants entered into and/or benefitted from arrangements with seemingly  
11 unbiased and independent organizations or groups that generated treatment guidelines, unbranded  
12 materials, and programs promoting chronic opioid therapy, including the American Pain Society  
13 (“APS”), American Geriatrics Society (“AGS”), the Federation of State Medical Boards (“FSMB”),  
14 American Chronic Pain Association (“ACPA”), American Society of Pain Education (“ASPE”),  
15 National Pain Foundation (“NPF”), and Pain & Policy Studies Group (“PPSG”).  
16

17           57. Defendants collaborated, through the aforementioned organizations and groups, to  
18 spread deceptive messages about the risks and benefits of long-term opioid therapy.  
19

20           58. To convince doctors and patients in California that opioids can and should be used to  
21 treat chronic pain, Defendants had to persuade them that long-term opioid use is both safe and  
22 helpful. Knowing that they could do so only by deceiving those doctors and patients about the risks  
23 and benefits of long-term opioid use, Defendants made claims that were not supported by or were  
24 contrary to the scientific evidence and which were contradicted by data.  
25

26           59. To convince doctors and patients that opioids are safe, Defendants deceptively  
27 trivialized and failed to disclose the risks of long-term opioid use, particularly the risk of addiction,  
28 through a series of misrepresentations that have been conclusively debunked by the FDA and CDC.

1 These misrepresentations—which are described below—reinforced each other and created the  
2 dangerously misleading impression that: (a) starting patients on opioids was low-risk because most  
3 patients would not become addicted, and because those who were at greatest risk of addiction could  
4 be readily identified and managed; (b) patients who displayed signs of addiction probably were not  
5 addicted and, in any event, could easily be weaned from the drugs; (c) the use of higher opioid  
6 doses, which many patients need to sustain pain relief as they develop tolerance to the drugs, do not  
7 pose special risks; and (d) abuse-deterrent opioids both prevent abuse and overdose and are  
8 inherently less addictive. Defendants have not only failed to correct these misrepresentations, they  
9 continue to make them today.  
10

11           60. Defendants falsely claimed that the risk of opioid addiction is low and that addiction  
12 is unlikely to develop when opioids are prescribed, as opposed to obtained illicitly; and failed to  
13 disclose the greater risk of addiction with prolonged use of opioids. Some examples of these false  
14 and deceptive claims by opioid manufacturers are: (a) Actavis employed a patient education  
15 brochure that falsely claimed opioid addiction is “less likely if you have never had an addiction  
16 problem”; (b) Cephalon and Purdue sponsored APF’s *Treatment Options: A Guide for People*  
17 *Living with Pain*, falsely claiming that addiction is rare and limited to extreme cases of  
18 unauthorized doses; (c) Endo sponsored a website, Painknowledge.com, which falsely claimed that  
19 “[p]eople who take opioids as prescribed usually do not become addicted”; (d) Endo distributed a  
20 pamphlet with the Endo logo entitled *Living with Someone with Chronic Pain*, which stated that:  
21 “most people do not develop an addiction problem”; (e) Janssen distributed a patient education  
22 guide entitled *Finding Relief: Pain Management for Older Adults* which described as “myth” the  
23 claim that opioids are addictive; (f) a Janssen website falsely claimed that concerns about opioid  
24 addiction are “overestimated”; (g) Purdue sponsored APF’s *A Policymaker’s Guide to*  
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1 *Understanding Pain & Its Management*, which falsely claims that pain is undertreated due to  
2 “misconceptions about opioid addiction”.

3  
4 61. These claims are contrary to longstanding scientific evidence, as the FDA and CDC  
5 have conclusively declared. As noted in the 2016 CDC Guideline endorsed by the FDA, there is  
6 “extensive evidence” of the “possible harms of opioids (including opioid use disorder [an  
7 alternative term for opioid addiction]).” The Guideline points out that “[o]pioid pain medication use  
8 presents serious risks, including . . . opioid use disorder” and that “continuing opioid therapy for  
9 three (3) months substantially increases risk for opioid use disorder.”

10  
11 62. The FDA further exposed the falsity of Defendants’ claims about the low risk of  
12 addiction when it announced changes to the labels for certain opioids in 2013 and for other opioids  
13 in 2016. In its announcements, the FDA found that “most opioid drugs have ‘high potential for  
14 abuse’” and that opioids “are associated with a substantial risk of misuse, abuse, NOWS [neonatal  
15 opioid withdrawal syndrome], addiction, overdose, and death.” According to the FDA, because of  
16 the “known serious risks” associated with long-term opioid use, including “risks of addiction,  
17 abuse, and misuse, even at recommended doses, and because of the greater risks of overdose and  
18 death,” opioids should be used only “in patients for whom alternative treatment options” like non-  
19 opioid drugs have failed. The FDA further acknowledged that the risk is not limited to patients who  
20 seek drugs illicitly; addiction “can occur in patients appropriately prescribed [opioids].”

22 63. The State of New York, in a 2016 settlement agreement with Endo, found that opioid  
23 “use disorders appear to be highly prevalent in chronic pain patients treated with opioids, with up to  
24 40% of chronic pain patients treated in specialty and primary care outpatient centers meeting the  
25 clinical criteria for an opioid use disorder.” Endo had claimed on its [www.opana.com](http://www.opana.com) website that  
26 “[m]ost healthcare providers who treat patients with pain agree that patients treated with prolonged  
27 opioid medicines usually do not become addicted,” but there was no evidence to support that  
28

1 statement. Consistent with this, Endo agreed not to “make statements that . . . opioids generally are  
2 non-addictive” or “that most patients who take opioids do not become addicted” in New York. This  
3 agreement, however, did not extend to California.

4  
5 64. Defendants falsely instructed doctors and patients that the signs of addiction are  
6 actually signs of undertreated pain and should be treated by prescribing more opioids. Defendants  
7 called this phenomenon “pseudo-addiction” —a term used by Dr. David Haddox, who went to work  
8 for Purdue, and Dr. Russell Portenoy, a KOL for Cephalon, Endo, Janssen, and Purdue. Defendants  
9 falsely claimed that pseudo-addiction was substantiated by scientific evidence. Some examples of  
10 these deceptive claims are: (a) Cephalon and Purdue sponsored *Responsible Opioid Prescribing*,  
11 which taught that behaviors such as “requesting drugs by name,” “demanding or manipulative  
12 behavior,” seeing more than one doctor to obtain opioids, and hoarding, are all signs of pseudo-  
13 addiction, rather than true addiction; (b) Janssen sponsored, funded, and edited the *Let’s Talk Pain*  
14 website, which in 2009 stated: “pseudo-addiction . . . refers to patient behaviors that may occur  
15 when pain is under-treated”; (c) Endo sponsored a National Initiative on Pain Control (NIPC) CME  
16 program titled *Chronic Opioid Therapy: Understanding Risk While Maximizing Analgesia*, which  
17 promoted pseudo-addiction by teaching that a patient’s aberrant behavior was the result of untreated  
18 pain; (d) Purdue sponsored a deceptive CME program entitled *Path of the Patient, Managing*  
19 *Chronic Pain in Younger Adults at Risk for Abuse* in which a narrator notes that because of pseudo-  
20 addiction, a doctor should not assume the patient is addicted.  
21  
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23 65. The 2016 CDC Guideline rejects the concept of pseudo-addiction, explaining that  
24 “[p]atients who do not experience clinically meaningful pain relief early in treatment . . . are  
25 unlikely to experience pain relief with longer-term use,” and that physicians should “reassess[] pain  
26 and function within 1 month” in order to decide whether to “minimize risks of long-term opioid use  
27 by discontinuing opioids” because the patient is “not receiving a clear benefit.”  
28

1           66.     Pharmaceutical Defendants falsely instructed doctors and patients that addiction risk  
2 screening tools, patient agreements, urine drug screens, and similar strategies were very effective to  
3 identify and safely prescribe opioids to even those patients predisposed to addiction. These  
4 misrepresentations were reckless because Pharmaceutical Defendants directed them to general  
5 practitioners and family doctors who lack the time and expertise to closely manage higher-risk  
6 patients on opioids. Pharmaceutical Defendants’ misrepresentations were intended to make doctors  
7 more comfortable in prescribing opioids. Some examples of these deceptive claims are: (a) an Endo  
8 supplement in the *Journal of Family Practice* emphasized the effectiveness of screening tools to  
9 avoid addictions; (b) Purdue’s webinar, *Managing Patient’s Opioid Use: Balancing the Need and*  
10 *Risk*, claimed that screening tools, urine tests, and patient agreements prevent “overuse of  
11 prescriptions” and “overdose deaths”; (c) Purdue represented in scientific conferences that “bad  
12 apple” patients—and not opioids—were the source of the addiction crisis, when in fact the “bad  
13 apples” were the Defendants.  
14

15  
16           67.     The 2016 CDC Guideline exposes the falsity of these misrepresentations, noting that  
17 there are no studies assessing the effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies—such as screening  
18 tools, patient contracts, urine drug testing, or pill counts widely believed by doctors to detect and  
19 deter abuse—“for improving outcomes related to overdose, addiction, abuse, or misuse.” The  
20 Guideline emphasizes that available risk screening tools “show insufficient accuracy for  
21 classification of patients as at low or high risk for [opioid] abuse or misuse” and counsels that  
22 doctors “should not overestimate the ability of these tools to rule out risks from long-term opioid  
23 therapy.”  
24

25           68.     To underplay the risk and impact of addiction and make doctors feel more  
26 comfortable starting patients on opioids, Pharmaceutical Defendants falsely claimed that opioid  
27  
28

1 dependence can easily be solved by tapering, that opioid withdrawal was not difficult, and that there  
2 were no problems in stopping opioids after long-term use.

3           69. A CME sponsored by Endo, entitled *Persistent Pain in the Older Adult*, claimed that  
4 withdrawal symptoms could be avoided by tapering a patient’s opioid dose by up to 20% for a few  
5 days. Purdue sponsored APF’s *A Policymaker’s Guide to Understanding Pain & Its Management*,  
6 that claimed “[s]ymptoms of physical dependence can often be ameliorated by gradually decreasing  
7 the dose of medication during discontinuation”, without mentioning any known or foreseeable  
8 issues.  
9

10           70. Pharmaceutical Defendants deceptively minimized the significant symptoms of  
11 opioid withdrawal—which, as explained in the 2016 CDC Guideline, include drug cravings,  
12 anxiety, insomnia, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, sweating, tremor, tachycardia (rapid  
13 heartbeat), spontaneous abortion and premature labor in pregnant women, and the unmasking of  
14 anxiety, depression, and addiction—and grossly understated the difficulty of tapering, particularly  
15 after long-term opioid use. The 2016 CDC Guideline recognizes that the duration of opioid use and  
16 the dosage of opioids prescribed should be “limit[ed]” to “minimize the need to taper opioids to  
17 prevent distressing or unpleasant withdrawal symptoms,” because “physical dependence on opioids  
18 is an expected physiologic response in patients exposed to opioids for more than a few days.” The  
19 Guideline further states that “tapering opioids can be especially challenging after years on high  
20 dosages because of physical and psychological dependence” and highlights the difficulties,  
21 including the need to carefully identify “a taper slow enough to minimize symptoms and signs of  
22 opioid withdrawal” and to “pause[] and restart[]” tapers depending on the patient’s response. The  
23 CDC also acknowledges the lack of any “high-quality studies comparing the effectiveness of  
24 different tapering protocols for use when opioid dosage is reduced or opioids are discontinued.”  
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1           71. Defendants falsely claimed that doctors and patients could increase opioid dosages  
2 indefinitely without added risk of addiction and other health consequences, and failed to disclose  
3 the greater risks to patients at higher dosages. The ability to escalate dosages was critical to  
4 Defendants' efforts to market opioids for long-term use to treat chronic pain because, absent this  
5 misrepresentation, doctors would have abandoned treatment when patients built up tolerance and  
6 lower dosages did not provide pain relief. For example: (a) an Actavis patient brochure stated:  
7 "Over time, your body may become tolerant of your current dose. You may require a dose  
8 adjustment to get the right amount of pain relief. This is not addiction"; (b) Cephalon and Purdue  
9 sponsored *APF's Treatment Options: A Guide for People Living with Pain*, claiming that some  
10 patients need larger doses of opioids, with "no ceiling dose" for appropriate treatment of severe,  
11 chronic pain; (c) an Endo website, [painknowledge.com](http://painknowledge.com), claimed that opioid dosages may be  
12 increased until "you are on the right dose of medication for your pain"; (d) an Endo pamphlet  
13 *Understanding Your Pain: Taking Oral Opioid Analgesics*, stated "The dose can be increased. . . .  
14 You won't 'run out' of pain relief"; (e) a Janssen patient education guide *Finding Relief: Pain*  
15 *Management for Older Adults* listed dosage limitations as "disadvantages" of other pain medicines  
16 yet omitted any discussion of risks of increased opioid dosages; (f) Purdue's In the Face of Pain  
17 website promotes the notion that if a patient's doctor does not prescribe what, in the patient's view,  
18 is a sufficient dosage of opioids, he or she should find another doctor who will; (g) Purdue's *A*  
19 *Policymaker's Guide to Understanding Pain & Its Management* stated that dosage escalations are  
20 "sometimes necessary," even unlimited ones, but did not disclose the risks from high opioid  
21 dosages; (h) a Purdue CME entitled *Overview of Management Options* taught that NSAIDs and  
22 other drugs, but not opioids, were unsafe at high dosages; (i) Purdue presented a 2015 paper at the  
23 College on the Problems of Drug Dependence challenging the correlation between opioid dosage  
24 and overdose.  
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1           72.     These and other representations conflict with the scientific evidence, as confirmed by  
2 the FDA and CDC. As the CDC explains in its 2016 Guideline, the “[b]enefits of high-dose opioids  
3 for chronic pain are not established” while the “risks for serious harms related to opioid therapy  
4 increase at higher opioid dosage.” More specifically, the CDC explains that “there is now an  
5 established body of scientific evidence showing that overdose risk is increased at higher opioid  
6 dosages.” The CDC states that “there is an increased risk for opioid use disorder, respiratory  
7 depression, and death at higher dosages.” That is why the CDC advises doctors to “avoid increasing  
8 dosages” above 90 morphine milligram equivalents per day.

10           73.     The 2016 CDC Guideline reinforces earlier findings announced by the FDA. In  
11 2013, the FDA acknowledged “that the available data do suggest a relationship between increasing  
12 opioid dose and risk of certain adverse events.” For example, the FDA noted that studies “appear to  
13 credibly suggest a positive association between high-dose opioid use and the risk of overdose and/or  
14 overdose mortality.”

16           74.     Pharmaceutical Defendants’ deceptive marketing of the so-called abuse-deterrent  
17 properties of some of their opioids created false impressions that these opioids can curb addiction  
18 and abuse. Indeed, in a 2014 survey of 1,000 primary care physicians, nearly half reported that they  
19 believed abuse-deterrent formulations are inherently less addictive.

21           75.     Pharmaceutical Defendants have made misleading claims about the ability of their  
22 so-called abuse-deterrent opioid formulations to deter abuse. For example, Endo’s advertisements  
23 for the 2012 reformulation of Opana ER falsely claimed that it was designed to be crush resistant, in  
24 a way that suggested it was more difficult to abuse. The FDA warned in a 2013 letter that there was  
25 no evidence Endo’s design “would provide a reduction in oral, intranasal or intravenous abuse.”  
26 Moreover, Endo’s own studies, which it failed to disclose, showed that Opana ER could still be  
27 ground and chewed.



1           76. In a 2016 settlement with the State of New York, Endo agreed not to make  
2 statements in New York that Opana ER was “designed to be, or is crush resistant.” The State of  
3 New York found those statements false and deceptive because there was no difference in the ability  
4 to extract the narcotic from Opana ER. Similarly, the 2016 CDC Guideline states that “[n]o studies”  
5 support the notion that “abuse-deterrent technologies [are] a risk mitigation strategy for deterring or  
6 preventing abuse,” noting that the technologies—even when they work—“do not prevent opioid  
7 abuse through oral intake, the most common route of opioid abuse, and can still be abused by non-  
8 oral routes.”

9  
10           77. These numerous, longstanding misrepresentations minimizing the risks of long-term  
11 opioid use persuaded doctors and patients to discount or ignore the true risks. Pharmaceutical  
12 Defendants also had to persuade them that there was a significant upside to long-term opioid use.  
13 But as the 2016 CDC Guideline makes clear, there is “insufficient evidence to determine the long-  
14 term benefits of opioid therapy for chronic pain.” In fact, the CDC found that “[n]o evidence shows  
15 a long-term benefit of opioids in pain and function versus no opioids for chronic pain with  
16 outcomes examined at least 1 year later (with most placebo-controlled randomized trials  $\leq$  6 weeks  
17 in duration)” and that other treatments were more or equally beneficial and less harmful than long-  
18 term opioid use. The FDA, too, has recognized the lack of evidence to support long-term opioid  
19 use. In 2013, the FDA stated that it was “not aware of adequate and well-controlled studies of  
20 opioids use longer than 12 weeks.” Despite this, Defendants falsely and misleadingly touted the  
21 benefits of long-term opioid use and falsely and misleadingly suggested that these benefits were  
22 supported by scientific evidence. Not only have Defendants failed to correct these false and  
23 deceptive claims, they continue to make them today.

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26           78. For example, Defendants falsely claimed that long-term opioid use improved  
27 patients’ function and quality of life, including the following misrepresentations: (a) an Actavis  
28

1 advertisement claimed that the use of Kadian to treat chronic pain would allow patients to return to  
2 work, relieve “stress on your body and your mental health,” and help patients enjoy their lives; (b)  
3 an Endo advertisement that claimed that the use of Opana ER for chronic pain would allow patients  
4 to perform demanding tasks, portraying seemingly healthy, unimpaired persons; (c) a Janssen  
5 patient education guide *Finding Relief: Pain Management for Older Adults* stated as “a fact” that  
6 “opioids may make it easier for people to live normally” such as sleeping peacefully, working,  
7 recreation, sex, walking, and climbing stairs; (d) Purdue advertisements of OxyContin entitled “Pain  
8 vignettes” implied that OxyContin improves patients’ function; (e) *Responsible Opioid Prescribing*,  
9 by Cephalon, Endo and Purdue, taught that relief of pain by opioids, by itself, improved patients’  
10 function; (f) Cephalon and Purdue sponsored APF’s *Treatment Options: A Guide for People Living*  
11 *with Pain* counseling patients that opioids “give [pain patients] a quality of life we deserve”; (g)  
12 Endo’s NIPC website *painknowledge.com* claimed that with opioids, “your level of function  
13 should improve; you may find you are now able to participate in activities of daily living, such as  
14 work and hobbies, that you were not able to enjoy when your pain was worse”; (h) Endo CMEs  
15 titled *Persistent Pain in the Older Patient* claimed that chronic opioid therapy had been “shown to  
16 reduce pain and improve depressive symptoms and cognitive functioning”; (i) Janssen sponsored,  
17 funded, and edited a website, *Let’s Talk Pain*, in 2009, which featured an interview edited by  
18 Janssen claiming that opioids allowed a patient to “continue to function”; (j) Purdue’s *A*  
19 *Policymaker’s Guide to Understanding Pain & Its Management* claimed that “multiple clinical  
20 studies” had shown opioids as effective in improving daily function, psychological health, and  
21 health-related quality of life for chronic pain patients; and (k) Purdue’s, Cephalon’s, Endo’s, and  
22 Janssen’s sales representatives have conveyed and continue to convey the message that opioids will  
23 improve patient function.  
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1           79.     These claims find no support in the scientific literature. The 2016 CDC Guideline  
2 concluded that “there is no good evidence that opioids improve pain or function with long-term use,  
3 and . . . complete relief of pain is unlikely.” The CDC reinforced this conclusion throughout its  
4 2016 Guideline:

- 5           • “No evidence shows a long-term benefit of opioids in pain and function versus  
6 no opioids for chronic pain with outcomes examined at least 1 year later . . .”
- 7           • “Although opioids can reduce pain during short-term use, the clinical evidence  
8 review found insufficient evidence to determine whether pain relief is sustained  
9 and whether function or quality of life improves with long-term opioid therapy.”
- 10          • “[E]vidence is limited or insufficient for improved pain or function with long-  
11 term use of opioids for several chronic pain conditions for which opioids are  
commonly prescribed, such as low back pain, headache, and fibromyalgia.”

12           80.     The 2016 CDC Guideline was not the first time a federal agency repudiated  
13 Defendants’ claim that opioids improved function and quality of life. In 2010, the FDA warned  
14 Actavis that “[w]e are not aware of substantial evidence or substantial clinical experience  
15 demonstrating that the magnitude of the effect of the drug [Kadian] has in alleviating pain, taken  
16 together with any drug-related side effects patients may experience . . . results in any overall  
17 positive impact on a patient’s work, physical and mental functioning, daily activities, or enjoyment  
18 of life.” In 2008, the FDA sent a warning letter to an opioid manufacturer, making it clear “that [the  
19 claim that] patients who are treated with the drug experience an improvement in their overall  
20 function, social function, and ability to perform daily activities . . . has not been demonstrated by  
21 substantial evidence or substantial clinical experience.”

22           81.     Defendants also falsely and misleadingly emphasized or exaggerated the risks of  
23 competing products like NSAIDs, so that doctors and patients would look to opioids first for the  
24 treatment of chronic pain. Once again, these misrepresentations by Defendants contravene  
25 pronouncements by and guidance from the FDA and CDC based on the scientific evidence. Indeed,  
26 the FDA changed the labels for ER/LA opioids in 2013 and IR opioids in 2016 to state that opioids  
27  
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1 should only be used as a last resort “in patients for which alternative treatment options” like non-  
2 opioid drugs “are inadequate.” The 2016 CDC Guideline states that NSAIDs, not opioids, should be  
3 the first-line treatment for chronic pain, particularly arthritis and lower back pain.

4           82. In addition, Purdue misleadingly promoted OxyContin as being unique among  
5 opioids in providing 12 continuous hours of pain relief with one dose. In fact, OxyContin does not  
6 last for 12 hours— a fact that Purdue has known at all relevant times. According to Purdue’s own  
7 research, OxyContin wears off in under six hours in one quarter of patients and in under 10 hours in  
8 more than half. This is because OxyContin tablets release approximately 40% of their active  
9 medicine immediately, after which release tapers. This triggers a powerful initial response, but  
10 provides little or no pain relief at the end of the dosing period, when less medicine is released. This  
11 phenomenon is known as “end of dose” failure, and the FDA found in 2008 that a “substantial  
12 number” of chronic pain patients taking OxyContin experience it. This not only renders Purdue’s  
13 promise of 12 hours of relief false and deceptive, it also makes OxyContin more dangerous because  
14 the declining pain relief patients experience toward the end of each dosing period drives them to  
15 take more OxyContin before the next dosing period begins, quickly increasing the amount of drug  
16 they are taking and spurring growing dependence.

17           83. Purdue’s competitors were aware of this problem. For example, Endo ran  
18 advertisements for Opana ER referring to “real” 12-hour dosing. Nevertheless, Purdue falsely  
19 promoted OxyContin as if it were effective for a full 12 hours. Indeed, Purdue’s sales  
20 representatives continue to tell doctors that OxyContin lasts a full 12 hours.

21           84. Cephalon deceptively marketed its opioids Actiq and Fentora for chronic pain even  
22 though the FDA has expressly limited their use to the treatment of cancer pain in opioid- tolerant  
23 individuals. Both Actiq and Fentora are extremely powerful fentanyl-based IR opioids. Neither is  
24 approved for or has been shown to be safe or effective for chronic pain. Indeed, the FDA expressly  
25 prohibited Cephalon from marketing Actiq for anything but cancer pain, and refused to approve  
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1 Fentora for the treatment of chronic pain because of the potential harm, including the high risk of  
2 “serious and life-threatening adverse events” and abuse—which are greatest in non-cancer patients.  
3 The FDA also issued a Public Health Advisory in 2007 emphasizing that Fentora should only be  
4 used for cancer patients who are opioid-tolerant and should not be used for any other conditions,  
5 such as migraines, post-operative pain, or pain due to injury.  
6

7 85. Despite this, Cephalon conducted and continues to conduct a well-funded campaign  
8 to promote Actiq and Fentora for chronic pain and other non-cancer conditions for which it was not  
9 approved, appropriate, or safe. As part of this campaign, Cephalon used CMEs, speaker programs,  
10 KOLs, journal supplements, and detailing by its sales representatives to give doctors the false  
11 impression that Actiq and Fentora are safe and effective for treating non-cancer pain. For example:  
12 (a) Cephalon paid to have a CME it sponsored, *Opioid-Based Management of Persistent and*  
13 *Breakthrough Pain*, published in a supplement of *Pain Medicine News* in 2009. The CME  
14 instructed doctors that “clinically, broad classification of pain syndromes as either cancer- or  
15 noncancer-related has limited utility” and recommended Actiq and Fentora for patients with  
16 chronic pain; (b) Cephalon’s sales representatives set up hundreds of speaker programs for doctors,  
17 including many non-oncologists, which promoted Actiq and Fentora for the treatment of non-  
18 cancer pain; (c) In December 2011, Cephalon widely disseminated a journal supplement entitled  
19 “*Special Report: An Integrated Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy for Fentanyl Buccal*  
20 *Tablet (FENTORA) and Oral Transmucosal Fentanyl Citrate (ACTIQ)*” to *Anesthesiology News*,  
21 *Clinical Oncology News*, and *Pain Medicine News*—three publications that are sent to thousands  
22 of anesthesiologists and other medical professionals. The Special Report openly promotes Fentora  
23 for “multiple causes of pain” —and not just cancer pain.  
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26 86. Cephalon’s deceptive marketing gave doctors and patients the false impression that  
27 Actiq and Fentora were not only safe and effective for treating chronic pain but were also approved  
28 by the FDA for such uses.

1           87.     Purdue unlawfully and unfairly failed to report or address illicit and unlawful  
2 prescribing of its drugs, despite knowing about it for years. Purdue’s sales representatives have  
3 maintained a database since 2002 of doctors suspected of inappropriately prescribing its drugs.  
4 Rather than report these doctors to state medical boards or law enforcement authorities (as Purdue  
5 is legally obligated to do) or cease marketing to them, Purdue used the list to demonstrate the high  
6 rate of diversion of OxyContin—the same OxyContin that Purdue had promoted as less  
7 addictive—in order to persuade the FDA to bar the manufacture and sale of generic copies of the  
8 drug because the drug was too likely to be abused. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times*,  
9 Purdue’s senior compliance officer acknowledged that in five years of investigating suspicious  
10 pharmacies, Purdue failed to take action—even where Purdue employees personally witnessed the  
11 diversion of its drugs. The same was true of prescribers; despite its knowledge of illegal  
12 prescribing, Purdue did not report until years after law enforcement shut down a Los Angeles  
13 clinic that prescribed more than 1.1 million OxyContin tablets and that Purdue’s district manager  
14 described internally as “an organized drug ring.” In doing so, Purdue protected its own profits at  
15 the expense of public health and safety.  
16  
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18           88.     The State of New York’s settlement with Purdue specifically cited the company  
19 for failing to adequately address suspicious prescribing. Yet, on information and belief, Purdue  
20 continues to profit from the prescriptions of such prolific prescribers.  
21

22           89.     Like Purdue, Endo has been cited for its failure to set up an effective system for  
23 identifying and reporting suspicious prescribing. In its settlement agreement with Endo, the State  
24 of New York found that Endo failed to require sales representatives to report signs of abuse,  
25 diversion, and inappropriate prescribing; paid bonuses to sales representatives for detailing  
26 prescribers who were subsequently arrested or convicted for illegal prescribing; and failed to  
27 prevent sales representatives from visiting prescribers whose suspicious conduct had caused  
28 them to be placed on a no-call list.

1           90.     As a part of their deceptive marketing scheme, Defendants identified and targeted  
2 susceptible prescribers and vulnerable patient populations in the U.S., including California. For  
3 example, Defendants focused their deceptive marketing on primary care doctors, who were more  
4 likely to treat chronic pain patients and prescribe them drugs, but were less likely to be educated  
5 about treating pain and the risks and benefits of opioids and therefore more likely to accept  
6 Defendants’ misrepresentations.  
7

8           91.     Defendants also targeted vulnerable patient populations like the elderly and veterans,  
9 who tend to suffer from chronic pain. Defendants targeted these vulnerable patients even though the  
10 risks of long-term opioid use were significantly greater for them. For example, the 2016 CDC  
11 Guideline observes that existing evidence shows that elderly patients taking opioids suffer from  
12 elevated fall and fracture risks, greater risk of hospitalization, and increased vulnerability to adverse  
13 drug effects and interactions. The Guideline therefore concludes that there are “special risks of  
14 long-term opioid use for elderly patients” and recommends that doctors use “additional caution and  
15 increased monitoring” to minimize the risks of opioid use in elderly patients. The same is true for  
16 veterans, who are more likely to use anti-anxiety drugs (benzodiazepines) for post-traumatic stress  
17 disorder, which interact dangerously with opioids.  
18

19           92.     Defendants, both individually and collectively, made, promoted, and profited from  
20 their misrepresentations about the risks and benefits of opioids for chronic pain even though they  
21 knew that their misrepresentations were false and deceptive. The history of opioids, as well as  
22 research and clinical experience over the last 20 years, established that opioids were highly  
23 addictive and responsible for a long list of very serious adverse outcomes. The FDA and other  
24 regulators warned Defendants of this, and Defendants had access to scientific studies, detailed  
25 prescription data, and reports of adverse events, including reports of addiction, hospitalization, and  
26 deaths—all of which made clear the harms from long-term opioid use and that patients are suffering  
27  
28

1 from addiction, overdoses, and death in alarming numbers. More recently, the FDA and CDC have  
2 issued pronouncements based on the medical evidence that conclusively expose the known falsity of  
3 Defendants' misrepresentations, and Endo and Purdue have recently entered agreements prohibiting  
4 them from making some of the same misrepresentations described in this Complaint in New York.  
5

6 93. Moreover, at all times relevant to this Complaint, Defendants took steps to avoid  
7 detection of and to fraudulently conceal their deceptive marketing and unlawful, unfair, and  
8 fraudulent conduct. For example, Defendants disguised their own role in the deceptive marketing  
9 of chronic opioid therapy by funding and working through third parties like Front Groups and  
10 KOLs. Defendants purposefully hid behind the assumed credibility of these individuals and  
11 organizations and relied on them to vouch for the accuracy and integrity of Defendants' false and  
12 deceptive statements about the risks and benefits of long-term opioid use for chronic pain.  
13

14 94. Defendants also never disclosed their role in shaping, editing, and approving the  
15 content of information and materials disseminated by these third parties. Defendants exerted  
16 considerable influence on these promotional and "educational" materials in emails, correspondence,  
17 and meetings with KOLs, fake independent groups, and public relations companies that were not,  
18 and have not yet become, public. For example, [painknowledge.org](http://painknowledge.org), which is run by the NIPC, did  
19 not disclose Endo's involvement. Other Defendants, such as Purdue and Janssen, ran similar  
20 websites that masked their own direct role.  
21

22 95. Finally, Defendants manipulated their promotional materials and the scientific  
23 literature to make it appear that these items were accurate, truthful, and supported by objective  
24 evidence when they were not. Defendants distorted the meaning or import of studies they cited and  
25 offered them as evidence for propositions the studies did not support. The lack of support for  
26 Defendants' deceptive messages was not apparent to medical professionals who relied upon them in  
27 making treatment decisions.  
28



1           96.     Thus, Defendants successfully concealed from the medical community, patients, and  
2 health care payers facts sufficient to arouse suspicion of the claims that the Tribe now asserts. The  
3 Tribe did not know of the existence or scope of Defendants' industry-wide fraud and could not have  
4 acquired such knowledge earlier through the exercise of reasonable diligence.

5           97.     Defendants' misrepresentations deceived doctors and patients about the risks and  
6 benefits of long-term opioid use. Studies also reveal that many doctors and patients are not aware of  
7 or do not understand these risks and benefits. Indeed, patients often report that they were not  
8 warned they might become addicted to opioids prescribed to them. As reported in January 2016, a  
9 2015 survey of more than 1,000 opioid patients found that 4 out of 10 were not told opioids were  
10 potentially addictive.  
11

12           98.     Defendants' deceptive marketing scheme caused and continues to cause doctors in  
13 California to prescribe opioids for chronic pain conditions such as back pain, headaches, arthritis,  
14 and fibromyalgia. Absent Defendants' deceptive marketing scheme, these doctors would not have  
15 prescribed as many opioids. Defendants' deceptive marketing scheme also caused and continues to  
16 cause patients to purchase and use opioids for their chronic pain believing they are safe and  
17 effective. Absent Defendants' deceptive marketing scheme, fewer patients would be using opioids  
18 long-term to treat chronic pain, and those patients using opioids would be using less of them.  
19

20           99.     Defendants' deceptive marketing has caused and continues to cause the prescribing  
21 and use of opioids to explode. Indeed, this dramatic increase in opioid prescriptions and use  
22 corresponds with the dramatic increase in Defendants' spending on their deceptive marketing  
23 scheme. Defendants' spending on opioid marketing totaled approximately \$91 million in 2000. By  
24 2011, that spending had tripled to \$288 million.  
25

26           100.    The escalating number of opioid prescriptions written by doctors who were deceived  
27 by Defendants' deceptive marketing scheme is the cause of a correspondingly dramatic increase in  
28

1 opioid addiction, overdose, and death throughout the U.S. and California. In August 2016, the U.S.  
2 Surgeon General published an open letter to be sent to physicians nationwide, enlisting their help in  
3 combating this “urgent health crisis” and linking that crisis to deceptive marketing. He wrote that  
4 the push to aggressively treat pain, and the “devastating” results that followed, had “coincided with  
5 heavy marketing to doctors . . . [m]any of [whom] were even taught—incorrectly—that opioids are  
6 not addictive when prescribed for legitimate pain.”  
7

8         101. Scientific evidence demonstrates a strong correlation between opioid prescriptions  
9 and opioid abuse. In a 2016 report, the CDC explained that “[o]pioid pain reliever prescribing has  
10 quadrupled since 1999 and has increased in parallel with [opioid] overdoses.” Patients receiving  
11 prescription opioids for chronic pain account for the majority of overdoses. For these reasons, the  
12 CDC concluded that efforts to rein in the prescribing of opioids for chronic pain are critical “to  
13 reverse the epidemic of opioid drug overdose deaths and prevent opioid-related morbidity.”  
14

15         102. Contrary to Defendants’ misrepresentations, most opioid addiction begins with  
16 legitimately *prescribed* opioids, and therefore could have been prevented had Defendants’  
17 representations to prescribers been truthful. In 2011, 71% of people who abused prescription  
18 opioids got them through friends or relatives, not from pill mills, drug dealers or the internet.  
19 Numerous doctors and substance abuse counselors note that many of their patients who misuse or  
20 abuse opioids started with legitimate prescriptions, confirming the important role that doctors’  
21 prescribing habits have played in the opioid epidemic.  
22

23         103. The supply chain for prescription opioids to the consumer from the manufacture  
24 begins with the distribution of pills to the Distributor Defendants, which together account for 85-90  
25 % of all revenues from drug distribution in the United States, an estimated \$378.4 billion in 2015.  
26 The distributors then supply opioids to hospitals, pharmacies, doctors, and other healthcare  
27 providers, which then dispense the drugs to patients.  
28

1           104. Each participant in the supply chain shares the responsibility for controlling the  
2 availability of prescription opioids. Opioid “diversion” occurs whenever the supply chain of  
3 prescription opioids is broken, and the drugs are transferred from a legitimate channel of  
4 distribution or use, to an illegitimate channel of distribution or use. Diversion can occur at any  
5 point in the opioid supply chain, including at the pharmacy level when prescriptions are filled for  
6 any reason other than a legitimate medical purpose.  
7

8           105. For example, at the wholesale level of distribution, diversion occurs whenever  
9 distributors allow opioids to be lost or stolen in transit, or when distributors fill suspicious orders of  
10 opioids from buyers, retailers, or prescribers. Suspicious orders include orders of unusually large  
11 size, orders that are disproportionately large in comparison to the population of a community served  
12 by the pharmacy, orders that deviate from a normal pattern, and/or orders of unusual frequency and  
13 duration.  
14

15           106. Diversion occurs at the pharmacies, including whenever a pharmacist fills a  
16 prescription despite having reason to believe it was not issued for a legitimate medical purpose or  
17 not in the usual course of practice. Some of the signs that a prescription may have been issued for  
18 an illegitimate medical purpose include when the patient seeks to fill multiple prescriptions from  
19 different doctors (a/k/a doctor shopping), when they travel great distances between the doctor or  
20 their residence and the pharmacy to get the prescription filled, when they present multiple  
21 prescriptions for the largest dose of more than one controlled substance, or when there are other  
22 “red flags” surrounding the transaction. These signs or “red flags” should trigger closer scrutiny of  
23 the prescriptions by the pharmacy and lead to a decision that the patient is not seeking the  
24 medication for purposes to treat a legitimate medical condition. In addition to diversion via  
25 prescription, opioids are also diverted from retail outlets when stolen by employees or others.  
26  
27  
28

1           107. Diversion occurs through the use of stolen or forged prescriptions at pharmacies, or  
2 the sale of opioids without prescriptions, including patients seeking prescription opioids under false  
3 pretenses.

4           108. Opioid diversion occurs in the United States at an alarming rate. In recent years, the  
5 number of people who take prescription opioids for non-medical purposes is greater than the  
6 number of people who use cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, and inhalants combined.

7           109. Every year, millions of people in the United States misuse and abuse opioid pain  
8 relievers that can lead to addiction, overdose and death. The overdose rate among Native Americans  
9 is significantly higher than the rest of the population.

10           110. Within the last 20 years, the abuse of prescription narcotic pain relievers has  
11 emerged as a public health crisis in the United States. Overdose deaths involving prescription  
12 opioids are at epidemic proportions, quadrupling since 1999, concomitant with sales of these  
13 prescriptions.

14           111. In 2011 overdose deaths from prescription opioids reached 16,917 people. In 2014  
15 18,893 people died from a prescription opioid related overdose. In 2015, the number of deaths  
16 increased to 22,598, even despite increased public health announcements.

17           112. The dramatic rise in heroin use in recent years is a direct result of prescription opioid  
18 diversion. The strongest risk factor for a heroin use disorder is prescription opioid use. In one  
19 national study covering the period 2008 to 2010, 77.4% of the participants reported using  
20 prescription opioids before initiating heroin use. Another study revealed that 75% of those who  
21 began their opioid abuse in the 2000s started with prescription opioid. The CDC has reported that  
22 people who are dependent on prescription opioid painkillers are 40 times more likely to become  
23 dependent on heroin. Heroin deaths are on a tragic upswing: In 2015, over 12,989 people died from  
24 heroin overdose-up more than 20% from approximately 10,574 overdose deaths in 2014.

1           113. The Tribe has taken proactive measures to fight against prescription opioid abuse,  
2 but such measures have not deterred Defendants' conduct.

3           114. Native Americans in general are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups in the  
4 United States to die from drug-induced deaths. Like other federally recognized Indian tribes, the  
5 Tribe has been hit by the effects of Defendants' opioid diversion.

6           115. The CDC reports that for every opioid-related death, there are on average 10 hospital  
7 admissions for abuse, 26 emergency department visits for misuse, 108 people who are dependent on  
8 opioids, and 733 non-medical users.

9           116. The impact on the Tribe's children has been hard. It has been reported that by 12th  
10 grade, nearly 13 percent of American Indian teens have used OxyContin, one of the most deadly  
11 opioids when misused. The use of OxyContin by American Indian 12th-graders was about double  
12 the National average.

13           117. A 2014 study funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse found a much higher  
14 prevalence of drug and alcohol use in the American Indian 8th and 10th graders compared with  
15 national averages. American Indian students' annual heroin and OxyContin use was about two to  
16 three times higher than the national averages in those years.

17           118. The fact that American Indian teens, including the Tribe's children, are easily able to  
18 obtain OxyContin at these alarming rates indicates the degree to which opioid diversion has created  
19 an illegal secondary market for opioids.

20           119. It has been reported that pregnant American Indian women are up to 8.7 times more  
21 likely to be diagnosed with opioid dependency or abuse compared to the next highest race/ethnicity;  
22 and it has been reported that in some communities upwards of 1 in 10 pregnant American Indian  
23 woman has a diagnosis of opioid dependency or abuse. On information and belief, these statistics  
24 apply similarly to pregnant women who are Tribal Members or the mothers of Tribal Members or  
25  
26  
27  
28

1 their descendants.

2           120. Many of the parents of these Tribal Member children continue to relapse into  
3 prescription opioid use and lose custody of the children. As a result, many of these children are  
4 placed in foster care or adopted.

5           121. Defendants' opioid diversion in and around the Tribe's Indian Lands contributes to a  
6 range of social problems including physical and mental consequences, crime, delinquency, and  
7 mortality. Adverse social outcomes include child abuse and neglect, family dysfunction, criminal  
8 behavior, poverty, property damage, unemployment, and social despair. As a result, more and more  
9 tribal resources are devoted to addiction-related problems, leaving a diminished pool of available  
10 resources to devote to positive societal causes like education, cultural preservation, and social  
11 programs. Meanwhile, the prescription opioid crisis diminishes the Tribe's available workforce,  
12 decreases productivity, increases poverty, and consequently requires greater government assistance  
13 expenditures by the Tribe.  
14

15  
16           The Tribe's community is affected by highly-addictive opioid painkillers diverted from  
17 Defendants' supply chains, thereby ensuring that the Tribal Members will continue to suffer from  
18 addiction rates higher than national averages and, commensurately, that Defendants will continue to  
19 profit by supplying opioids to the area. This civil lawsuit is the Tribe's only remaining weapon to  
20 fight against the worsening opioid abuse epidemic that Defendants have caused to the Tribe, Tribal  
21 Members, non-Tribal Member inhabitants of the Tribe's Indian Lands (such as Tribal member  
22 spouses and descendants) and employees of the Tribe or wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe.  
23

24           122. Defendants have a duty to exercise reasonable care under the circumstances. This  
25 involves a duty not to create a foreseeable risk of harm to others. Additionally, one who engages in  
26 affirmative conduct, and thereafter realizes or should realize that such conduct has created an  
27 unreasonable risk of harm to another, is under a duty to exercise reasonable care to prevent the  
28 threatened harm.

1           123. In addition to having common law duties, the Distributor Defendants are governed  
2 by the statutory requirements of the Controlled Substances Act (“CSA”), 21 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.  
3 and its implementing regulations. These requirements were enacted to protect society from the  
4 harms of drug diversion. The Distributor Defendants’ violations of these requirements show that  
5 they failed to meet the relevant standard of conduct that society expects from them. The Distributor  
6 Defendants’ repeated, unabashed, and prolific violations of these requirements show that they have  
7 acted in total reckless disregard for Tribe, Tribal Members, non-Tribal Member inhabitants of the  
8 Tribe’s Indian Lands (such as Tribal member spouses and descendants) and employees of the Tribe  
9 or wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe.  
10

11           124. The CSA creates a legal framework for the distribution and dispensing of controlled  
12 substances. Congress passed the CSA partly out of a concern about “the widespread diversion of  
13 [controlled substances] out of legitimate channels into the illegal market.” See H.R. Rep. No. 91-  
14 1444, 1970 U.S.C.C.A.N. at 4566; 4572.  
15

16           125. Accordingly, the CSA acts as a system of checks and balances from the  
17 manufacturing level through delivery of the pharmaceutical drug to the patient or ultimate user.  
18 Every person or entity that manufactures, distributes, or dispenses opioids must obtain a  
19 “registration” with the DEA. Registrants at every level of the supply chain must fulfill their  
20 obligations under the CSA, otherwise controlled substances move from the legal to the illicit  
21 marketplace, and there is enormous potential for harm to the public.  
22

23           126. All opioid distributors are required to maintain effective controls against opioid  
24 diversion. They are also required to create and use a system to identify and report downstream  
25 suspicious orders of controlled substances to law enforcement. Suspicious orders include orders of  
26 unusual size, orders deviating substantially from the normal pattern, and orders of unusual  
27 frequency. To comply with these requirements, distributors must know their customers, report  
28 suspicious orders, conduct due diligence, and terminate orders if there are indications of diversion.

1           127. To prevent unauthorized users from obtaining opioids, the CSA creates a distribution  
2 monitoring system for controlled substances, including registration and tracking requirements  
3 imposed upon anyone authorized to handle controlled substances. The DEA’s Automation of  
4 Reports and Consolidation Orders System (“ARCOS”) is an automated drug reporting system that  
5 records and monitors the flow of Schedule II controlled substances from point of manufacture  
6 through commercial distribution channels to point of sale. ARCOS accumulates data on  
7 distributors’ controlled substances, acquisition transactions, and distribution transactions, which are  
8 then summarized into reports used by the DEA to identify any diversion of controlled substances  
9 into illicit channels of distribution. Each person or entity that is registered to distribute ARCOS  
10 Reportable controlled substances must report acquisition and distribution transactions to the DEA.  
11

12           128. Acquisition and distribution transaction reports must provide data on each  
13 acquisition to inventory (identifying whether it is, e.g., by purchase or transfer, return from a  
14 customer, or supply by the Federal Government) and each reduction from inventory (identifying  
15 whether it is, e.g., by sale or transfer, theft, destruction or seizure by Government agencies) for each  
16 ARCOS Reportable controlled substance. 21 U.S.C. § 827(d) (1); 21 C.F.R. §§ 1304.33(e), (d).  
17 Inventory that has been lost or stolen must also be reported separately to the DEA within one  
18 business day of discovery of such loss or theft.  
19

20           129. In addition to filing acquisition/distribution transaction reports, each registrant is  
21 required to maintain a complete, accurate, and current record of each substance manufactured,  
22 imported, received, sold, delivered, exported, or otherwise disposed of. 21 U.S.C. §§ 827(a)(3),  
23 1304.21(a), 1304.22(b). It is unlawful for any person to negligently fail to abide by the  
24 recordkeeping and reporting requirements.  
25

26           130. To maintain registration, distributors must also maintain effective controls against  
27 diversion of controlled substances into other than legitimate medical, scientific and industrial  
28 channels. When determining if a distributor has provided effective controls, the DEA Administrator



1 refers to the security requirements set forth in §§ 130 1.72-1301.76 as standards for the physical  
2 security controls and operating procedures necessary to prevent diversion. 21 CFR § 1301.71.

3 131. For years the Defendants have known of the problems and consequences of opioid  
4 diversion in the supply chain.

5 132. To combat the problem of opioid diversion, the DEA has provided guidance to  
6 distributors on the requirements of suspicious order reporting in numerous venues, publications,  
7 documents, and final agency actions. Since 2006, the DEA has conducted one-on-one briefings with  
8 distributors regarding their downstream customer sales, due diligence responsibilities, and legal and  
9 regulatory responsibilities (including the responsibility to know their customers and report  
10 suspicious orders to the DEA). The DEA provided distributors with data on controlled substance  
11 distribution patterns and trends, including data on the volume of orders, frequency of orders, and  
12 percentage of controlled vs. non-controlled purchases. The distributors were given case studies,  
13 legal findings against other registrants, and ARCOS profiles of their customers whose previous  
14 purchases may have reflected suspicious ordering patterns. The DEA emphasized the “red flags”  
15 distributors should look for to identify potential diversion.  
16  
17

18 133. Since 2007, the DEA has hosted no less than five conferences to provide opioid  
19 distributors with updated information about diversion trends. The Defendant Distributors attended  
20 at least one of these conferences, which allowed for questions and discussions. The DEA has  
21 participated in numerous meetings and events with the legacy Healthcare Distribution Management  
22 Association (HDMA), now known as the Healthcare Distribution Alliance (HDA), an industry trade  
23 association for wholesalers and distributors. DEA representatives have provided guidance to the  
24 association concerning suspicious order monitoring, and the association has published guidance  
25 documents for its members on suspicious order monitoring, reporting requirements, and the  
26 diversion of controlled substances.  
27  
28

134. On September 27, 2006 and December 27, 2007, the DEA Office of Diversion

1 Control sent letters to all registered distributors providing guidance on suspicious order monitoring  
2 of controlled substances and the responsibilities and obligations of the registrant to conduct due  
3 diligence on controlled substance customers as part of a program to maintain effective controls  
4 against diversion.

5  
6 135. The September 27, 2006 letter reminded registrants that they were required by law to  
7 exercise due diligence to avoid filling orders that could be diverted into the illicit market. The DEA  
8 explained that as part of the legal obligation to maintain effective controls against diversion, the  
9 distributor was required to exercise due care in confirming the legitimacy of each and every order  
10 prior to filling. It also described circumstances that could be indicative of diversion including  
11 ordering excessive quantities of a limited variety of controlled substances while ordering few if any  
12 other drugs; disproportionate ratio of ordering controlled substances versus non-controlled  
13 prescription drugs; the ordering of excessive quantities of a limited variety of controlled substances  
14 in combination with lifestyle drugs; and ordering the same controlled substance from multiple  
15 distributors. The letter went on to describe what questions should be answered by a customer when  
16 attempting to make a determination if the order is indeed suspicious.

17  
18 136. On December 27, 2007, the Office of Diversion Control sent a follow-up letter to  
19 DEA registrants providing guidance and reinforcing the legal requirements outlined in the  
20 September 2006 correspondence. The letter reminded registrants that suspicious orders must be  
21 reported when discovered and monthly transaction reports of excessive purchases did not meet the  
22 regulatory criteria for suspicious order reporting. The letter also advised registrants that they must  
23 perform an independent analysis of a suspicious order prior to the sale to determine if the controlled  
24 substances would likely be diverted, and that filing a suspicious order and then completing the sale  
25 does not absolve the registrant from legal responsibility. Finally, the letter directed the registrant  
26 community to review a recent DEA action called Southwood Pharmaceuticals, Inc., 72 FR 36487  
27 (2007) that addressed criteria in determining suspicious orders and their obligation to maintain  
28

1 effective controls against diversion.

2 137. The Distributor Defendants' own industry group, the Healthcare Distribution  
3 Management Association, published Industry Compliance Guidelines titled "Reporting Suspicious  
4 Orders and Preventing Diversion of Controlled Substances", emphasizing the critical role of each  
5 member of the supply chain in distributing controlled substances.

6 138. These industry guidelines stated: "At the center of a sophisticated supply chain,  
7 distributors are uniquely situated to perform due diligence in order to help support the security of  
8 controlled substances they deliver to their customers."

9 139. Opioid distributors have admitted to the magnitude of the problem and, at least  
10 superficially, their legal responsibilities to prevent diversion. They have made statements assuring  
11 the public they are supposedly undertaking a duty to curb the opioid epidemic.  
12

13 140. For example, a Cardinal executive claimed that Cardinal uses "advanced analytics"  
14 to monitor its supply chain. He further extolled that Cardinal was being "as effective and efficient as  
15 possible in constantly monitoring, identifying, and eliminating any *outside* criminal activity."  
16 (emphasis added).  
17

18 141. McKesson has publicly stated that it has a "best-in-class controlled substance  
19 monitoring program to help identify suspicious orders" and claimed it is "deeply passionate about  
20 curbing the opioid epidemic in our Country." These assurances, on their face, of identifying  
21 and eliminating criminal activity and curbing the opioid epidemic create a duty for the Distributor  
22 Defendants to take reasonable measures to do just that.  
23

24 142. In addition to the obligations imposed by law, through their own words,  
25 representations, and actions, the Distributor Defendants have voluntarily undertaken a duty to  
26 protect the public at large against diversion from their supply chains, and to curb the opioid  
27 epidemic. In this voluntary undertaking, the Distributor Defendants have miserably and negligently  
28 failed.

1           143. The Distributors Defendants have knowingly or negligently allowed diversion. Their  
2 wrongful conduct and inaction have resulted in numerous civil fines and other penalties recovered  
3 by state and federal agencies- including actions by the DEA related to violations of the Controlled  
4 Substances Act.

5           144. In 2008, Cardinal paid a \$34 million penalty to settle allegations about opioid  
6 diversion taking place at seven of its warehouses in the United States. In 2012, Cardinal reached an  
7 administrative settlement with the DEA relating to opioid diversion between 2009 and 2012 in  
8 multiple states. In December 2016, a Department of Justice press release announced a multi-million  
9 dollar settlement with Cardinal for violations of the Controlled Substances Act. In connection with  
10 the investigations of Cardinal, the DEA uncovered evidence that Cardinal's own investigator  
11 warned Cardinal against selling opioids to a particular pharmacy that was suspected of opioid  
12 diversion. Cardinal did nothing to notify the DEA or cut off the supply of drugs to the suspect  
13 pharmacy. Cardinal did just the opposite, pumping up opioid shipments to the pharmacy to almost  
14 2,000,000 doses of oxycodone in one year, while other comparable pharmacies were receiving  
15 approximately 69,000 doses/year.

16           145. In May 2008, McKesson entered into a settlement with the DEA on claims that  
17 McKesson failed to maintain effective controls against diversion of controlled substances.  
18 McKesson allegedly failed to report suspicious orders from rogue Internet pharmacies around the  
19 Country, resulting in millions of doses of controlled substances being diverted. McKesson agreed to  
20 pay a \$13.25 million civil fine. McKesson also was supposed to implement tougher controls  
21 regarding opioid diversion. McKesson utterly failed. McKesson's system for detecting "suspicious  
22 orders" from pharmacies was so ineffective and dysfunctional that at one of its facilities in Colorado  
23 between 2008 and 2013, it filled more than 1.6 million orders, for tens of millions of controlled  
24 substances, but it reported just 16 orders as suspicious, all from a single consumer. In 2015,  
25 McKesson was in the middle of allegations concerning its "suspicious order reporting practices for  
26  
27  
28

1 controlled substances.” In early 2017, it was reported that McKesson agreed to pay \$150 million to  
2 the government to settle certain opioid diversion claims that it allowed drug diversion at 12  
3 distribution centers in 11 states.

4           146. In 2007, AmerisourceBergen lost its license to send controlled substances from a  
5 distribution center amid allegations that it was not controlling shipments of prescription opioids to  
6 Internet pharmacies. Again in 2012, AmerisourceBergen was implicated for failing to protect  
7 against diversion of controlled substances into non-medically necessary channels. It has been  
8 reported that the U.S. Department of Justice has subpoenaed AmerisourceBergen for documents in  
9 connection with a grand jury proceeding seeking information on the company’s “program for  
10 controlling and monitoring diversion of controlled substances into channels other than for legitimate  
11 medical, scientific and industrial purposes.”  
12

13           147. State Boards of Pharmacy have directly disciplined the wholesale distributors of  
14 prescription opioids for failure to prevent diversion.  
15

16           148. Although distributors have been penalized by law enforcement authorities, these  
17 penalties have not changed their conduct. They pay fines as a cost of doing business in an industry  
18 that generates billions of dollars in revenue and profit.

19           149. The Distributor Defendants have the ability and owe the duty to prevent opioid  
20 diversion, which presented a known or foreseeable danger of serious injury to the Tribe, Tribal  
21 Members, non-Tribal Member inhabitants of the Tribe’s Indian Lands (such as Tribal member  
22 spouses and descendants) and employees of the Tribe or wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe.  
23

24           150. The Distributor Defendants have supplied massive quantities of prescription opioids  
25 within the economic proximity of the Tribe with the actual or constructive knowledge that the  
26 opioids were ultimately being consumed by Tribal Members and non-Tribal Member inhabitants of  
27 the Tribe’s Indian Lands (such as Tribal member spouses and descendants) and employees of the  
28 Tribe or wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe for non-medical purposes. Many of these shipments

1 should have been stopped or investigated as suspicious orders, but the Distributor Defendants  
2 negligently or intentionally failed to do so.

3         151. Each Distributor Defendant knew or should have known that the amount of opioids  
4 that it allowed to flow into the Tribe and surrounding areas was far in excess of what could be  
5 consumed for medically-necessary purposes in the relevant communities (especially given that each  
6 Distributor Defendant knew it was not the only opioid distributor servicing those communities).

7  
8         152. The Distributor Defendants negligently or intentionally failed to adequately control  
9 their supply lines to prevent diversion. A reasonably-prudent distributor of Schedule II controlled  
10 substances would have anticipated the danger of opioid diversion and protected against it by, for  
11 example, taking greater care in hiring, training, and supervising employees; providing greater  
12 oversight, security, and control of supply channels; looking more closely at the pharmacists and  
13 doctors who were purchasing large quantities of commonly-abused opioids in amounts greater than  
14 the populations in those areas would warrant; investigating demographic or epidemiological facts  
15 concerning the increasing demand for narcotic painkillers in and around the Tribe's Indian Lands;  
16 providing information to pharmacies and retailers about opioid diversion; and in general, simply  
17 following applicable statutes, regulations, professional standards, and guidance from government  
18 agencies and using a little bit of common sense.

19  
20         153. On information and belief, the Distributor Defendants made little to no effort to visit  
21 the pharmacies within the economic proximity of the Tribe, servicing the Tribal Members, to  
22 perform due diligence inspections to ensure that the controlled substances the Distributors  
23 Defendants had furnished were not being diverted to illegal uses.

24  
25         154. On information and belief, the compensation the Distributor Defendants provided to  
26 certain of their employees was affected, in part, by the volume of their sales of opioids to  
27 pharmacies and other facilities servicing the Tribe, thus improperly creating incentives that  
28 contributed to and exacerbated opioid diversion and the resulting epidemic of opioid abuse.

1           155. It was reasonably foreseeable to the Distributor Defendants that their conduct in  
2 flooding the market in and around the Tribe with highly addictive opioids would allow opioids to  
3 fall into the hands of children, addicts, criminals, and other unintended users.

4           156. It is reasonably foreseeable to the Distributor Defendants that, when unintended  
5 users gain access to opioids, tragic preventable injuries will result, including addiction, overdoses,  
6 and death. It is also reasonably foreseeable that many of these injuries will be suffered by the  
7 Tribe's members, and that the costs of these injuries will be borne by the Tribe.

8           157. The Distributor Defendants knew or should have known that the opioids being  
9 diverted from their supply chains would contribute to the opioid epidemic within the Tribe, and  
10 would create access to opioids by unauthorized users, which, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of  
11 addiction, demand, illegal transactions, economic ruin, and human tragedy.

12           158. The Distributor Defendants knew or should have known that a substantial amount of  
13 the opioids dispensed within the economic proximity of the Tribe were being dispensed based on  
14 invalid or suspicious prescriptions. It is foreseeable that filling suspicious orders for opioids will  
15 cause harm to individual pharmacy customers, third parties, and the Tribe.

16           159. The Distributor Defendants were aware of widespread prescription opioid abuse in  
17 and around the Tribe, but they nevertheless persisted in a pattern of distributing commonly abused  
18 and diverted opioids in geographic areas—and in such quantities, and with such frequency—that  
19 they knew or should have known these commonly abused controlled substances were not being  
20 prescribed and consumed for legitimate medical purposes.

21           160. The use of opioids by Tribal Members, non-Tribal Member inhabitants of the Tribe's  
22 Indian Lands (such as Tribal member spouses and descendants) and employees of the Tribe or  
23 wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe who were addicted or who did not have a medically  
24 necessary purpose could not occur without the knowing cooperation and assistance of the  
25 Distributor Defendants. If any of the Distributor Defendants adhered to effective controls to guard  
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1 against diversion, significant injury could have been avoided.

2           161. The Distributor Defendants made substantial profits over the years based on the  
3 diversion of opioids into the Tribe. Their participation and cooperation in a common enterprise has  
4 foreseeably caused injuries and financial damages to the Tribe, Tribal Members, non-Tribal  
5 Member inhabitants of the Tribe’s Indian Lands (such as Tribal member spouses and descendants)  
6 and employees of the Tribe or wholly owned enterprises of the Tribe. The Distributor Defendants  
7 knew full well that the Tribe would be unjustly forced to bear the costs of these injuries and  
8 damages.  
9

10           162. The Distributor Defendants’ intentional distribution of excessive amounts of  
11 prescription opioids to a relatively small community in and around the Tribe showed an intentional  
12 or reckless disregard for the safety of the Tribe and its Tribal Members. Their conduct poses a  
13 continuing threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the Tribe.  
14

15           163. Pharmacies must exercise reasonable care under the circumstances. This involves a  
16 duty not to create a foreseeable risk of harm to others. Additionally, one who engages in affirmative  
17 conduct, and thereafter realizes or should realize that such conduct has created an unreasonable risk  
18 of harm to another, is under a duty to exercise reasonable care to prevent the threatened harm.  
19

20           164. Pharmacies are the “last line of defense” in keeping drugs from entering the illicit  
21 market. They are meant to be the drug experts in the healthcare delivery system and as such have  
22 considerable duties and responsibility in the oversight of patient care. They cannot blindly fill  
23 prescriptions written by a doctor, even one registered under the CSA to dispense opioids, if the  
24 prescription is not for a legitimate medical purpose.

25           165. The CSA imposes duties and requirements on the conduct of the Pharmacy  
26 Defendants. These requirements, along with their related regulations and agency interpretations, set  
27 a standard of care for pharmacy conduct.  
28

166. The CSA requires pharmacists to review each controlled substance prescription and,



1 prior to dispensing medication, make a professional determination that the prescription is effective  
2 and valid.

3 167. Under the CSA, pharmacy registrants are required to “provide effective controls and  
4 procedures to guard against theft and diversion of controlled substances.” 21 C.F.R. § 1301.71(a).  
5 In addition, 21 C.F.R. § 1306.04(a) states, “[t]he responsibility for the proper prescribing and  
6 dispensing of controlled substances is upon the prescribing practitioner, but a corresponding  
7 responsibility rests with the pharmacist who fills the prescription.”

9 168. Pharmacists are required to ensure that prescriptions for controlled substances are  
10 valid. Pharmacists are the last check in the opioid distribution industry. Pharmacists are to ensure  
11 that prescriptions are issued for a legitimate medical purpose by an individual practitioner acting in  
12 the usual course of his or her professional practice.

13 169. The DEA’s 2010 “Practitioner’s Manual” section on “Valid Prescription  
14 Requirements” instructs that “[a]n order purporting to be a prescription issued not in the usual  
15 course of professional treatment or in legitimate and authorized research is an invalid prescription.”  
16 Filling such a prescription is illegal. This Manual states: “The law does not require a pharmacist to  
17 dispense a prescription of doubtful, questionable, or suspicious origin. To the contrary, the  
18 pharmacist who deliberately ignores a questionable prescription when there is reason to believe it  
19 was not issued for a legitimate medical purpose may be prosecuted.”

21 170. The DEA (as well as state pharmacy boards, national industry associations, and  
22 continuing educational programs) have provided extensive guidance to pharmacists concerning their  
23 duties to the public. The guidance teaches pharmacists how to identify red flags, which indicate to  
24 the pharmacist that there may be a problem with the legitimacy of a prescription presented by a  
25 patient. The guidance also tells pharmacists how to resolve the red flags and what to do if the red  
26 flags are unresolvable.  
27

28 171. The industry guidance tells pharmacists how to recognize stolen prescription pads;

1 prescription pads printed using a legitimate doctor's name, but with a different call back number  
2 that is answered by an accomplice of the drug-seeker; prescriptions written using fictitious patient  
3 names and addresses, and so on.

4           172. Questionable or suspicious prescriptions include: prescriptions written by a doctor  
5 who writes significantly more prescriptions (or in larger quantities) for controlled substances  
6 compared to other practitioners in the area; prescriptions which should last for a month in legitimate  
7 use, but are being refilled on a shorter basis; prescriptions for antagonistic drugs, such as  
8 depressants and stimulants, at the same time; prescriptions that look "too good" or where the  
9 prescriber's handwriting is too legible; prescriptions with quantities or dosages that differ from  
10 usual medical usage; prescriptions that do not comply with standard abbreviations and/or contain  
11 no abbreviations; photocopied prescriptions; or prescriptions containing different handwritings.  
12 Most of the time, these attributes are not difficult to detect or recognize; they should be apparent to  
13 an adequately trained pharmacist.  
14

15  
16           173. Signs that a customer is seeking opioids for the purpose of diversion include  
17 customers who: appear to be returning too frequently; are seeking to fill a prescription written for a  
18 different person; appear at the pharmacy counter simultaneously, or within a short time, all bearing  
19 similar prescriptions from the same physician; are not regular patrons or residents of the  
20 community, and show up with prescriptions from the same physician; drive long distances to have  
21 prescriptions filled; seek large volumes of controlled substances in the highest strength in each  
22 prescription; seek a combination of other drugs with opioids such as tranquilizers and muscle  
23 relaxers that can be used to create an "opioid cocktail"; and pay large amounts of cash for their  
24 prescriptions rather than using insurance. Ignoring these signs violates industry standards and DEA  
25 guidelines.  
26

27           174. Other "red flags" include when prescriptions that lack the technical requirements of a  
28 valid prescription, such as a verifiable DEA number and signature; prescriptions written in excess of

1 the amount needed for proper therapeutic purposes; prescriptions obtained through disreputable or  
2 illegal web-based pharmacies; and patients receiving multiple types of narcotic pain killers on the  
3 same day.

4           175. All of these issues have been presented by the DEA in pharmacist training programs  
5 throughout the United States and have been used as examples by individual state boards of  
6 pharmacy and the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy.

7  
8           176. Industry standards require pharmacists to contact the prescriber for verification or  
9 clarification whenever there is a question about any aspect of a prescription order. If a pharmacist is  
10 ever in doubt, he or she must ask for proper identification. If a pharmacist believes the prescription  
11 is forged or altered, he or she should not dispense it and call the local police. If a pharmacist  
12 believes he or she has discovered a pattern of prescription diversion, the local Board of Pharmacy  
13 and DEA must be contacted.

14  
15           177. A standard of care for the Pharmacy Defendants is also set by applicable professional  
16 regulations in California. It is a violation of professional standards not to attempt to address the  
17 suspected addiction of a patient to a drug dispensed by the pharmacist, if there is reason to believe  
18 the patient may be addicted.

19           178. On information and belief, the Pharmacy Defendants regularly filled prescriptions in  
20 circumstances where red flags were present (and sometimes many red flags).

21  
22           179. On information and belief, the Pharmacy Defendants regularly filled opioid  
23 prescriptions that would have been deemed questionable or suspicious by a reasonably prudent  
24 pharmacy.

25           180. On information and belief, the Pharmacy Defendants have not adequately trained or  
26 supervised their employees at the point of sale to investigate or report suspicious or invalid  
27 prescriptions, or protect against corruption or theft by employees or others.

28           181. On information and belief, the Pharmacy Defendants utilize monetary compensation

1 programs for certain employees that are based, in part, on the number of prescriptions filled and  
2 dispensed. This type of compensation creates economic disincentives within the companies to  
3 change their practices. For example, there have been reports of chain store supervisory personnel  
4 directing pharmacists to fill prescriptions regardless of the red flags presented.

5  
6 182. The Pharmacy Defendants have violated a voluntarily undertaken duty to the public  
7 which they have assumed by their own words and actions. In news reports and other public  
8 documents, it has been reported that the Pharmacy Defendants, through their words or actions, have  
9 assured the public that issues affecting public health and safety are the highest priority for the  
10 defendants.

11  
12 183. For example, in 2015, CVS publicly stated that, “the abuse of controlled substance  
13 pain medication is a nationwide epidemic that is exacting a devastating toll upon individuals,  
14 families and communities. Pharmacists have a legal obligation under state and federal law to  
15 determine whether a controlled substance was issued for a legitimate purpose and to decline to fill  
16 prescriptions they have reason to believe were issued for a non-legitimate purpose.”

17  
18 184. In failing to take adequate measures to prevent substantial opioid-related injuries to  
19 the Tribe and its members, the Pharmacy Defendants have breached their duties under the  
20 “reasonable care” standard, professional duties under the relevant standards of professional practice,  
21 and requirements established by federal law under the CSA.

22  
23 185. It is foreseeable to the Pharmacy Defendants that filling invalid or suspicious  
24 prescriptions for opioids would cause harm to individual pharmacy customers, including Tribal  
25 Members who may use the wrongfully dispensed opioids, and would also the Tribal government.

26  
27 186. It is reasonably foreseeable to the Pharmacy Defendants that, when unintended users  
28 gain access to opioids, tragic preventable injuries will result, including overdoses and death. It is  
also reasonably foreseeable many of these injuries will be suffered by the Tribe and its Tribal  
Members.

1 187. At all relevant times, the Pharmacy Defendants have engaged in improper dispensing  
2 practices, and continue to do so, despite knowing full well they could take measures to substantially  
3 eliminate their complicity in opioid diversion.

4 188. At all relevant times, the Pharmacy Defendants engaged in these activities, and  
5 continue to do so, knowing full well that the Tribe, in its role of providing protection and care for its  
6 members, would provide or pay for additional medical services, emergency services, law  
7 enforcement, and other necessary services, as well as by the loss of substantial economic  
8 productivity that contributes to the health and well-being of the Tribe.

9 189. It is reasonably foreseeable to the Pharmacy Defendants that the Tribe would be  
10 forced to bear substantial expenses as a result of the Pharmacy Defendants' acts.

11 190. The Pharmacy Defendants were on notice of their ongoing negligence or intentional  
12 misconduct towards the Tribe in part because of their history of being penalized for violating their  
13 duties and legal requirements in other jurisdictions.

14 191. In 2013, Defendant CVS agreed to pay \$11 million to avoid civil charges for  
15 violating federal laws relating to the sales of prescription opioids at pharmacies in the State of  
16 Oklahoma. Specifically, CVS allegedly violated the recordkeeping requirements for tracking and  
17 dispensing prescription drugs including oxycodone and hydrocodone.

18 192. Defendants CVS, Walgreens, and Wal-Mart each have one or more pharmacies  
19 ranked in the top ten pharmacies that fill prescriptions for opioids, some of which are operating in  
20 an area where Tribal Members fill their prescriptions. All have been prosecuted and disciplined for  
21 diversion of prescription opioids.

22 193. The Pharmacy Defendants were also aware of the magnitude of the opioid diversion  
23 crisis based on investigations into their practices elsewhere. For example, in 2013, Walgreens  
24 settled with the DEA for \$80 million, resolving allegations that it committed an unprecedented  
25 number of record-keeping and dispensing violations at various retail locations and a distribution  
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1 center. As part of the settlement, Walgreens agreed to enhance its training and compliance  
2 programs, and to no longer compensate its pharmacists based on the volume of prescriptions filled.

3 194. CVS also agreed to pay \$450,000 to resolve allegations that pharmacists were filling  
4 opioid prescriptions written by unauthorized medical personnel. More recently, in 2016, CVS  
5 settled a case pending in Massachusetts, by agreeing to pay \$3.5 million to resolve allegations that  
6 50 CVS stores violated the CSA by filling forged oxycodone prescriptions more than 500 times  
7 between 2011 and 2014.  
8

9 **COUNT I**

10 **NUISANCE**

11 196. The Tribe re-alleges and incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs.

12 197. The nuisance is the over-saturation of opioids within the economic proximity of the  
13 Tribe, and to Tribal Members, for non-medical purposes, as well as the adverse social and  
14 environmental outcomes associated with widespread illegal opioid use.  
15

16 198. All Defendants substantially participated in nuisance-causing activities.

17 199. Defendants' nuisance-causing activities include selling or facilitating the sale of  
18 prescription opioids from premises around the Tribe to unintended users in the Tribe—including  
19 children, people at risk of overdose or suicide, and criminals.

20 200. Defendants' nuisance-causing activities also include failing to implement effective  
21 controls and procedures in their supply chains to guard against theft, diversion and misuse of  
22 controlled substances, and their failure to adequately design and operate a system to detect, halt and  
23 report suspicious orders of controlled substances.  
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25 201. Defendants' activities unreasonably interfere with the following common rights of  
26 the Tribal Members:

27 a. To be free from reasonable apprehension of danger to person and property;  
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- b. To be free from the spread of disease within the community including the disease of addiction and other diseases associated with widespread illegal opioid use;
- c. To be free from the negative health and safety effects of widespread illegal drug sales on premises in and around the Tribe;
- d. To be free from blights on the community created by areas of illegal drug use and opioid sales;
- e. The right to live or work in a community in which local businesses do not profit from using their premises to sell products that serve the criminal element and to foster a secondary market of illegal transactions; and
- f. The right to live or work in a community in which community members are not under the influence of narcotics unless they have a legitimate medical need to use them.

202. The Defendants' interference with these rights of the Tribe is unreasonable because

it:

- a. Has harmed and will continue to harm the public health and public peace of the Tribe;
- b. Has harmed and will continue to harm the Tribe's community by increasing the levels of vagrancy, and property crime, and thereby interfering with the rights of the Tribal community at large;
- c. Is proscribed by statutes and regulation, including the CSA, pharmacy regulations, and the consumer protection statute;
- d. Is of a continuing nature, and it has produced a long-lasting effect; and
- e. Defendants have reason to know their conduct has a significant effect upon the public rights of the Tribe and its Tribal Members.

203. The nuisance undermines Coyote Valley Tribal Members' public health, quality of life, and safety. It has resulted in increased crime and property damage within the Tribe. It has resulted in high rates of addiction, overdoses, dysfunction, and despair within the Tribe's families and its entire community, which threatens the fabric of the Tribe and its general welfare.





1 **NEGLIGENCE AND GROSS NEGLIGENCE**

2 212. The Tribe re-alleges and incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs.

3 213. Defendants owe a non-delegable duty to the Tribe to conform their behavior to the  
4 legal standard of reasonable conduct under the circumstances, in the light of the apparent risks.

5 214. There is no social value to Defendants' challenged behavior. In fact, Defendants'  
6 behavior is against the law, i.e., facilitating the diversion of opioids to the illicit black market.

7 215. On the other hand, there is immense social value to the interests threatened by  
8 Defendants' behavior, namely the health, safety, and welfare of the Tribe and its members.

9 216. There is an extremely high likelihood of Defendants' behavior causing a substantial  
10 injury to the Tribe's interests. The harmful consequences of opioid diversion are apparent from the  
11 statistics related to prescription opioid overdoses and deaths.

12 217. Defendants' conduct fell below the reasonable standard of care. Their negligent acts  
13 include:

- 14
- 15 a. Consciously oversupplying the market in and around the Tribe with highly-addictive prescription opioids,
  - 16 b. Using unsafe distribution and dispensing practices;
  - 17 c. Affirmatively enhancing the risk of harm from prescription opioids by failing to act as a last line of defense against diversion;
  - 18 d. Inviting criminal activity into the Tribe by disregarding precautionary measures built into the CSA, pharmacy board regulations, and applicable law;
  - 19 e. Failing to properly train or investigate their employees;
  - 20 f. Failing to properly review prescription orders for red flags;
  - 21 g. Failing to report suspicious orders or refuse to fill them;
  - 22 h. Failing to provide effective controls and procedures to guard against theft and diversion of controlled substances; and
  - 23 i. Failing to police the integrity of their supply chains.
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1           218. Each Defendant had an ability to control the opioids at a time when it knew or  
2 should have known it was passing control of the opioids to an actor further down in the supply  
3 chain that was incompetent or acting illegally and should not be entrusted with the opioids.

4           219. Each Defendant sold prescription opioids in the supply chain knowing both that (1)  
5 there was a substantial likelihood many of the sales were for non-medical purposes, and (2) opioids  
6 are an inherently dangerous product when used for non-medical purposes.

7           220. Defendants were negligent or reckless in not acquiring and utilizing special  
8 knowledge and special skills that relate to the dangerous activity in order to prevent or ameliorate  
9 such distinctive and significant dangers.

10           221. Controlled substances are dangerous commodities. Defendants breached their duty to  
11 exercise the degree of care, prudence, watchfulness, and vigilance commensurate to the dangers  
12 involved in the transaction of their business.

13           222. Defendants were also negligent or reckless in failing to guard against foreseeable  
14 third-party misconduct, e.g., the foreseeable conduct of: corrupt prescribers, corrupt pharmacists  
15 and staff, and/or criminals who buy and sell opioids for non-medical purposes.

16           223. Defendants are in a limited class of registrants authorized to legally distribute  
17 controlled substances to, among, and within the economic proximity of the Tribe. This places  
18 Defendants in a position of great trust and responsibility vis-a-vis the Tribe. Defendants owe a  
19 special duty to the Tribe; the duty owed cannot be delegated to another party.

20           224. The Tribe is without fault, and the injuries to the Tribe and its members would not  
21 have happened in the ordinary course of events if the Defendants used due care commensurate to  
22 the dangers involved in the distribution and dispensing of controlled substances.

23           225. The aforementioned conduct of Defendants proximately caused damage to the Tribe  
24 including increased healthcare and law enforcement costs, lower tax revenue, and lost productivity.  
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1 **COUNT III**

2 **UNJUST ENRICHMENT**

3 226. The Tribe re-alleges and incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs.

4 227. The Tribe has expended substantial amounts of money to fix or mitigate the societal  
5 harms caused by Defendants' conduct.

6 228. The expenditures by the Tribe in providing healthcare services to people who use  
7 opioids have added to Defendants' wealth. The expenditures by the Tribe have helped sustain  
8 Defendants' businesses.

9 229. The Tribe has conferred a benefit upon Defendants, by paying for what may be  
10 called Defendants' externalities-the costs of the harm caused by Defendants' negligent distribution  
11 and sales practices.

12 230. Defendants are aware of this obvious benefit, and that retention of this benefit is  
13 unjust.

14 231. Defendants made substantial profits while fueling the prescription drug epidemic in  
15 the Tribe.

16 232. Defendants continue to receive considerable profits from the distribution of  
17 controlled substances in the Tribe.

18 233. Defendants have been unjustly enriched by their negligent, intentional, malicious,  
19 oppressive, illegal and unethical acts, omissions, and wrongdoing.

20 234. It would be inequitable to allow Defendants to retain benefit or financial advantage.

21 235. The Tribe demands judgment against each Defendant for restitution, disgorgement,  
22 and any other relief allowed in law or equity.

23 **COUNT IV**

24 **AS TO PHARMACEUTICAL DEFENDANTS**

25 **COMMON LAW FRAUD**

1           236. The Tribe re-alleges and incorporates by reference the foregoing paragraphs.

2           237. Pharmaceutical Defendants engaged in false representations and concealments of  
3 material fact regarding the use of opioids to treat chronic non-cancer pain.

4           238. Defendant Purdue made and/or disseminated deceptive statements, including, but not  
5 limited to, the following: (a) advertising that opioids improved long-term functioning long-term and  
6 were suitable for the treatment of chronic non-cancer pain; (b) promoting the concept of pseudo-  
7 addiction; (c) brochures concerning indicators of possible opioid abuse; (d) suitability of opioids for  
8 high-risk patients; (e) publications presenting an unbalanced treatment of the long-term and dose-  
9 dependent risks of opioids versus NSAIDs; (f) concealment of funding of pro-opioid KOL doctors  
10 regarding treatment for chronic non-cancer pain; (g) downplaying of the risks of opioid addiction;  
11 (h) CMEs promoting the use of opioids to treat chronic non-cancer pain; (i) promotion of  
12 misleading scientific studies regarding the safety and efficacy of opioids for long-term treatment of  
13 chronic non-cancer pain; (j) misuse and promotion of data to mask the true safety and efficacy of  
14 opioids for the long-term treatment of chronic non-cancer pain, including rates of abuse and  
15 addiction and the lack of validation for long-term efficacy; (k) misleading statements in education  
16 materials for California hospital doctors and staff under guise of educating them on new pain  
17 standards; (l) in-person detailing; and (m) withholding from California law enforcement the names  
18 of prescribers Purdue believed to be facilitating the diversion of its products, while simultaneously  
19 marketing opioids to these doctors by disseminating patient and prescriber education materials and  
20 advertisements and CMEs.  
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24           239. Defendant Endo made and/or disseminated deceptive statements, including, but not  
25 limited to, the following: (a) false patient education materials; (b) advertising the ability of opioids  
26 to improve function long-term and the efficacy of opioids long-term for the treatment of chronic  
27 non-cancer pain; (c) promoting chronic opioid therapy as safe and effective for long term use for  
28 high- risk patients; (d) Creating and disseminating advertisements that falsely and inaccurately

1 conveyed the impression that Endo's opioids would provide a reduction in oral, intranasal, or  
2 intravenous abuse; (e) concealing the true risk of addiction and promoting the misleading concept of  
3 pseudo-addiction; (f) promoting an unbalanced treatment of the long-term and dose-dependent risks  
4 of opioids versus NSAIDs; (g) secretly funding pro-opioid KOLs, who made deceptive statements  
5 concerning the use of opioids to treat chronic non-cancer pain; (h) funding pro-opioid pain  
6 organizations responsible for egregious misrepresentations concerning the use of opioids to treat  
7 chronic non-cancer pain; (i) downplaying the risks of opioid addiction in the elderly; (j) CMEs  
8 containing deceptive statements concerning the use of opioids to treat chronic non-cancer pain; (k)  
9 misleading scientific studies concluding opioids are safe and effective for the long-term treatment of  
10 chronic non-cancer pain and quality of life, while concealing contrary data; (l) funding and  
11 promoting pro-opioid KOLs concerning the use of opioids to treat chronic non-cancer pain,  
12 including the concept of pseudo-addiction; (m) manipulation of data regarding safety and efficacy  
13 of opioids for the long-term treatment of chronic non-cancer pain, including known rates of abuse  
14 and addiction and the lack of validation for long-term efficacy; and (n) in-person detailing.

17       240. Defendant Janssen made and/or disseminated deceptive statements, including, but  
18 not limited to, the following: (a) patient education materials containing deceptive statements  
19 regarding the suitability, benefits, and efficacy of opioids; (b) stating that opioids were safe and  
20 effective for the long-term treatment of chronic non-cancer pain; (c) stating that opioids improve  
21 quality of life, while concealing contrary data; (d) concealing the true risk of addiction; (e)  
22 promoting the deceptive concept of pseudo-addiction; (f) promoting opioids for the treatment of  
23 conditions for which Janssen knew, due to the scientific studies it conducted, that opioids were not  
24 efficacious, and concealing this information; (g) presenting to the public and doctors an unbalanced  
25 treatment of the long-term and dose-dependent risks of opioids versus NSAIDs; (h) funding pro-  
26 opioid KOLs, who made deceptive statements concerning the use of opioids to treat chronic non-  
27 cancer pain; (i) funding pro-opioid pain organizations that made deceptive statements, including in  
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1 (f) All such other relief this Court and/or jury deems just and fair;

2 (g) Trial by jury for all counts so triable.

3 Dated this 29th day of January 2018.

4 Respectfully Submitted,

5 **COYOTE VALLEY BAND OF POMO INDIANS,**

6  
7 PLAINTIFF

8 By Its Attorneys:

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