

Oklahoma Supreme Court rejects request to delay opioid trial

[Associated Press](#)

AP

by

Published: Mon, March 25, 2019 2:34 PM Updated: Mon, March 25, 2019 2:34 PM



FILE - In this Feb. 1, 2019, file photo, is Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter smiles during an interview in Oklahoma City. The Oklahoma Supreme Court has denied a request by drugmakers to postpone the trial in the state's lawsuit accusing them of fueling the opioid epidemic. The state's highest court handed down the decision Monday, a week after attorneys for drugmakers and the state made oral presentations on the request to delay the trial's scheduled May 28 start. Hunter sued 13 opioid manufacturers in 2017, alleging they fraudulently engaged in marketing campaigns that led to thousands of overdose addictions and deaths. Several states have filed similar lawsuits, but Oklahoma's is expected to be the first to go to trial. (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki, File)

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — The Oklahoma Supreme Court on Monday denied a request by drugmakers to postpone the start of what is expected to be the first state trial in lawsuits accusing the companies of fueling an opioid epidemic.

Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter sued 13 opioid manufacturers in 2017, alleging they fraudulently engaged in marketing campaigns that led to thousands of overdose addictions and deaths.

The drugmakers argued last week that they needed more time to analyze more than a million documents of evidence they received from the attorney general last month. They requested a 100-day postponement of the trial scheduled to start May 28 in Cleveland County. A judge there had already denied the request.

Hunter said Monday that the Supreme Court's ruling keeps the lawsuit on track for trial.

"Every day that goes by, we lose more of our loved ones to overdoses or down the tragic road of addiction," the attorney general said in a statement. "We appreciate the quick action taken by the court and for not rewarding the defendants with more time for a problem of their own making."

Sandy Coats, an attorney for one of the drugmakers, Purdue Pharma Inc., did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

Several states have filed similar lawsuits, but Oklahoma's is expected to be the first to go to trial.

Among other things, Oklahoma's lawsuit seeks an injunction against the manufacturers' marketing practices and monetary damages that Hunter said he hopes will be dedicated to the rehabilitation of opioid-addicted Oklahomans.