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(The touchdown was quite pleasing to watch.)

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## Milwaukee County weighs lawsuits against drug-makers, distributors for costs of opioid epidemic

Don Behm, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Published 3:00 p.m. CT Oct. 17, 2017 | Updated 3:29 p.m. CT Oct. 17, 2017



(Photo: Handout photo)

Milwaukee County officials are discussing possible lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies and distributors to recover some costs of battling a growing opioid epidemic.

Milwaukee County Corporation Counsel Margaret Daun is asking the County Board to authorize the hiring of outside legal experts to prepare lawsuits against companies whose bad faith business practices contribute to a local epidemic of overdoses and deaths.

The county has spent millions of dollars on programs and services aimed at curbing the crisis and widespread addiction to painkillers, according to Daun. Those expenses limit resources available for other essential programs, she said in a draft resolution.

The Milwaukee County medical examiner estimates there will be more than 325 opioid overdose deaths in the county this year. The office is on pace to record a total of 426 drug-related deaths in 2017 — a nearly 25% increase from the 343 deaths last year.

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Both County Executive Chris Abele and Board Chairman Theodore Lipscomb Sr. support Daun's proposal. The board's judiciary committee is scheduled to act on the proposal Thursday.

Outside legal counsel would be paid only if the county receives a financial settlement as a result of claims made against the companies, under terms of the resolution.



More than two dozen states, cities and counties in the U.S. already have filed lawsuits against drug companies, as well as drugstore chains.

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