In response to questions from Kaiser Health News seeking comment about its aggressive early marketing of painkiller OxyContin and lawsuits against the company, Robert Josephson, executive director for communications for drug maker Purdue Pharma, issued the following statement:

"***Purdue Pharma is committed to addressing the opioid crisis as we support a number of public health policies that are designed to stem the tide of opioid-related addiction and limit prescribing.***

Suggesting activities that last occurred more than 16 years ago, for which the company accepted responsibility, helped contribute to today's complex and multi-faceted opioid crisis is deeply flawed. The bulk of opioid prescriptions are not, and have never been for OxyContin, which represents less than 2% of current opioid prescriptions. As government reports state, today's increase of fatal opioid-related overdoses is being driven by abuse of heroin and illicit fentanyl.

For more than 15 years we've led industry efforts to help address prescription opioid abuse which includes developing medications with abuse-deterrent properties; funding state prescription drug monitoring programs; working with law enforcement to help with accessing naloxone; and sponsoring educational initiatives aimed at teenagers warning of the dangers of opioids. We recognize that more needs to be done and we continue to pursue a range of solutions that will have a meaningful impact to help address this national public health crisis."

Statement on the lawsuits:

"We share public officials' concern about the opioid crisis, and we are committed to working collaboratively toward meaningful solutions. We vigorously deny these allegations *and look forward to the opportunity to present our defense.*

The various jurisdictions make claims that Purdue acted improperly by communicating with prescribers about scientific and medical information that FDA has expressly considered and continues to approve. We believe it is inappropriate for these jurisdictions to substitute their judgment for the judgment of the regulatory, scientific and medical experts at FDA."
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