

28 advance the sale of prescription opioids by:

- 29 (1) downplaying the serious risk of addiction;
- 30 (2) promoting the concept of "pseudoaddiction" and advocating that the signs of
- 31 addiction should be treated with more opioids;
- 32 (3) claiming that opioid dependence and withdrawal are easily managed; and
- 33 (4) denying the risks of higher opioid dosages;

34 WHEREAS, serious allegations have been raised that prescription opioid manufacturers
35 spread, and continue to spread, misinformation about the risks of their products:

- 36 (1) through false and deceptive direct marketing;
- 37 (2) by using a diverse group of seemingly independent third parties to spread false and
- 38 deceptive statements about the risks and benefits of opioids; and
- 39 (3) by using a diverse group of false organizations, that purport to be neutral,
- 40 independent, and trusted third parties, to publish false information regarding the risks and
- 41 benefits of opioids in order to deceive doctors and health care providers;

42 WHEREAS, this behavior occurred as the North American prescription opioid market
43 ~~was~~ **grew** to a value of \$12.4 billion in 2015 with an expected annual growth rate of
43a 4.6%;

44 WHEREAS, prescription opioid manufacturers realized these profits as thousands of
45 individuals lost their lives, having fallen victim to prescription opioid addictions;

46 WHEREAS, 91 Americans die each day from opioid-related drug overdose deaths
47 according to the Centers for Disease Control ~~and~~ **Prevention** ;

48 WHEREAS, drug overdoses kill more Americans under age 50 than anything else;

49 WHEREAS, conservative estimates show that 500,000 people will die in the United
50 States over the next decade due to opioid overdose, which is more than HIV/AIDS has killed
51 since that epidemic began in the early 1980s;

52 WHEREAS, more people die each year from opioid overdoses than from drivers who
53 are under the influence of alcohol;

54 WHEREAS, Utah has the seventh-highest drug overdose rate in the United States;

55 WHEREAS, in 2015, one person died nearly every day from an opioid overdose in
56 Utah;

57 WHEREAS, according to the Department of Health, the rate of prescription opioids
58 dispensed in Utah from 2002 to 2015 grew by 29.4%, averaging nearly five opioid

59 prescriptions per patient in 2015;

60 WHEREAS, from 2000 to 2015, the state experienced a nearly 400% increase in deaths
61 from the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs;

62 WHEREAS, drug overdoses kill more people in Utah than motor vehicle crashes;

63 WHEREAS, in 2014, 32% of Utah adults aged 18 years and older were prescribed an
64 opioid pain medication;

65 WHEREAS, the Council of Economic Advisers estimates that in 2015, the economic
66 cost of the opioid crisis was \$504 billion, or 2.8% of the nation's gross domestic product that
67 year;

68 WHEREAS, the state and its political subdivisions' law enforcement, criminal justice,
69 drug treatment, and other social service programs have incurred enormous costs because of the
70 opioid crisis;

71 WHEREAS, President Donald Trump declared the opioid epidemic a public health
72 emergency in October 2017;

73 WHEREAS, 16 states have already filed suit against opioid manufacturers seeking
74 damages for the public cost of the opioid crisis: Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky,
75 Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New Jersey, Ohio,
76 Oklahoma, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Washington;

77 WHEREAS, dozens of local jurisdictions have also filed suit against opioid

78 **Ŝ→ [manufactures] manufacturers ←Ŝ** ; and

79 WHEREAS, Cache, Davis, Salt Lake, Utah, Washington, and Weber counties have
80 already announced plans to file suit against prescription opioid manufacturers because of:

81 (1) the highly evident costs of the opioid crisis to the state;

82 (2) opioid manufacturers' clear and reckless role in perpetuating the crisis;

83 (3) opioid manufacturers' apparent indifference toward the problems they are accused
84 of causing;

85 (4) the clear path other states have laid for Utah to follow; and

86 (5) consistent requests from civic and political leaders and the citizens of the state:

87 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature calls upon the attorney
88 general to:

89 (1) immediately and publicly commit to directly filing suit against prescription opioid