

For Immediate Release:

Majority of Georgia Counties Reaping Benefits from Opioid Settlements

ATHENS, GA. – (Jan. 21, 2025) – Athens law firm Blasingame, Burch, Garrard & Ashley, P.C. (BBGA) presently represents 82 clients, consisting of 72 Georgia counties, six Georgia cities, and three Georgia county hospital authorities, in In re: National Prescription Opiate Litigation, MDL 2804 (the National Opioid Litigation). BBGA lawyers [Drew Hill](#) and [Jim Matthews](#) represent the largest number of Georgia local government entities in the State of Georgia – a testament to the local attorneys BBGA works with recognizing the importance of the opioid epidemic, the impact it has had on local communities, and BBGA’s previous work in national MDLs (Multi-District Litigations).

“From the outset, Drew Hill [BBGA attorney] was most helpful in educating the elected officials of Fayette County about the multi-state opioid litigation,” said Dennis A. Davenport of McNally, Fox, Grant & Davenport, P.C. “His frequent appearances and the provision of much-needed answers to critical questions from the Board of Commissioners prompted Fayette County to get involved. His regular communications with Fayette County since that time have been much appreciated,” said Davenport. “The level of responsiveness and accountability demonstrated by Drew and his firm has made this as painless a process as possible for Fayette County. We appreciate the relationship that has developed between Fayette County and the Blasingame firm, and we look forward to continuing that relationship into the future.”

The National Opioid Litigation, which is overseen by Judge Aaron Polster in the Northern District of Ohio, was created in 2017 and consolidated thousands of individual lawsuits filed by states, local governments, tribes, and other plaintiffs. The lawsuits seek to hold opioid manufacturers, distributors, and pharmacies accountable for their role in causing the opioid epidemic by, among other things, misrepresenting the risks of long-term opioid use and failing to monitor suspicious orders.

As a result of years of litigation, certain states and local governments reached monumental national settlements totaling \$26 billion in 2021, with three of the largest opioid distributors – McKesson, Cardinal Health, and AmerisourceBergen – and opioid manufacturer and marketer Johnson & Johnson. In 2023, national settlements totaling nearly \$20 billion were reached with opioid manufacturers and marketers Teva and Allergan, and three of the largest pharmacy chain distributors – CVS, Walgreens, and Wal-Mart. Most recently, a national settlement with Kroger was reached for more than \$1 billion.



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Acknowledging that the opioid crisis is a national, state, and local issue, BBGA worked closely with attorneys for other Georgia local governments, Governor Brian Kemp’s Office, the Georgia Office of the Attorney General, and other law firms representing the State of Georgia (Barnes Law Group, LLC; The Cooper Firm; Franklin Law, LLC; and the Beasley Allen Law Firm) to ensure that funds from the national settlements were maximized in Georgia, and would best support state and local efforts to address the opioid epidemic throughout the state.

As a result of these collective efforts, Georgia specific Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were reached with respect to each of the national settlements. Notably, under the MOUs, local governments receive 25% of the settlement funds allocated to Georgia under the national settlements.

While the State of Georgia receives 75% of the settlement funds allocated to Georgia under the national settlements, the MOUs require that the State of Georgia expend at least 40% of its share on a regional basis. In that vein, a Georgia Opioid Crisis Abatement Trust was created to support regional spending of settlement funds and to support opioid remediation uses throughout Georgia.

All 82 of BBGA’s clients signed on to each of the national settlements and have since received millions in settlement funds that allow them to support opioid remediation uses, such as addiction treatment, overdose prevention, and law enforcement efforts in their communities. More settlements with other Defendants are anticipated in 2025. Clients will continue to receive payments from the national opioid settlements for years to come.

“It has been our pleasure to represent our city, county and hospital clients in the National Opioid Litigation for the last seven years,” said BBGA Attorney Drew Hill. “I truly believe that the settlement funds we have been able to recover for those clients have gone a long way in helping individuals suffering from the effects of the opioid crisis to return to hopefully better lives for themselves and their families. I just regret that for whatever reason, some Georgia counties missed out on such an opportunity by declining to participate in the litigation,” he said. “Fortunately, most Georgia counties did participate.”

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