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**CRUEGER DICKINSON LLC AND SIMMONS HANLY CONROY FILE
LAWSUITS ON BEHALF OF 28 COUNTIES IN WISCONSIN AGAINST
DRUG COMPANIES OVER OPIOIDS EPIDEMIC AND ADDICTION**

*County Representatives Join Legal Team to File First Complaints in Wisconsin Against
Manufacturers of Prescription Painkillers*

WEST BEND, WI (November 7, 2017) – [Crueger Dickinson LLC](#), a leading Wisconsin law firm focused on high stakes litigation, and [Simmons Hanly Conroy](#), one of the nation’s largest law firms focused on consumer protection and mass tort actions, joined forces today to file lawsuits on behalf of 28 Wisconsin counties against pharmaceutical companies over the aggressive and fraudulent marketing of prescription opioid painkillers that has led to a drug epidemic in the state and throughout the nation.

The counties, which represent over 1 million Wisconsinites, seek relief in the complaint that includes compensatory and punitive damages for the millions of dollars they spend each year to combat the public nuisance created by the drug companies’ deceptive marketing campaign that misrepresents the safety and efficacy of long-term opioid use.

Today’s lawsuits are one of the largest groups of cases filed in federal court against pharmaceutical manufacturers to address the opioid crisis. Simmons Hanly Conroy has already filed 20 opioid cases on behalf of counties and municipalities in state courts nationwide. These 28 suits are the first opioid cases filed in federal court on behalf of counties by Simmons Hanly Conroy. Simmons Hanly Conroy and Crueger Dickinson, through their joint venture, look forward to filing additional opioid cases in federal courts nationwide. The defendants in the lawsuit are: Purdue Pharma L.P.; Purdue Pharma, Inc.; The Purdue Frederick Company, Inc.; Teva Pharmaceuticals USA, Inc.; Cephalon, Inc.; Johnson & Johnson; Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Janssen Pharmaceutica, Inc.; Endo Health Solutions Inc.; Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; Dr. Perry Fine; Dr. Scott Fishman and Dr. Lynn Webster.

“The lawsuits filed today on behalf of 28 Wisconsin counties represent an important step towards addressing the opioid crisis in the State of Wisconsin and seek to hold defendants responsible for their central role in creating this crisis. County governments are bearing the brunt of the costs of this crisis. Defendants must be held responsible for the devastating effects their actions have produced on

counties across this country,” said **Erin Dickinson** of Crueger Dickinson LLC, lead counsel along with partner, Charles Crueger, in the lawsuits filed today.

“I applaud the county leaders for taking action against the defendants who have deceived the public by omitting critical information that has long been known about opioids’ addictive qualities and other risks associated with their prolonged use,” said **Simmons Hanly Conroy Shareholder Paul Hanly**, lead counsel in the case. “We are proud to stand with Erin and Charles as they seek justice for these counties and the 1 million Wisconsinites they represent.”

“This litigation is the only viable manner Jackson County has in attempting to recover a portion of the vast amount of resources expended on the opioid epidemic that has been created by numerous pharmaceutical firms in the sole interest of profit,” said **Ray Ransom**, Jackson County Board Chairman.

“The tragedy of opioid abuse and addiction crosses all social and economic lines. Children, families, pregnant women, unborn children, communities, and many other facets of our society are being harmed through the epidemic of addiction. Our law enforcement, human services and judicial systems are being stressed in the effort to effectively respond to and manage the damage caused by opioid abuse and addiction. In much the same way as the challenge to the big tobacco industry has been able to yield significant and healthy change to our society, so now does the opportunity exist to affect real change for our citizens to overcome the crisis of opioid abuse and addiction,” said **Alan Sleeter**, Chair, Oconto County Health and Human Services Board.

Jim Schroeder, Jefferson County Board Chair added, “Communities throughout Wisconsin have been suffering the devastating effects of this opioid epidemic for years and we in Jefferson County believe it is time to take a stand. Families have been destroyed and our hospitals and emergency services overwhelmed because of this opioid epidemic. Jefferson County is proud to stand here with its neighboring counties and collectively seek justice for so many who have been harmed.”

Among the attendees were representatives from the counties of Adams, Columbia, Door, Douglas, Eau Claire, Florence, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oconto, Oneida, Pierce, Price, Rock, Rusk, Sauk, Shawano, Sheboygan, Washburn, Washington, Waupaca and Wood.

According to the lawsuit, in 2015, the majority of opioid-related deaths in Wisconsin involved prescription opioids. Today, the number of Wisconsinites who die as a result of drug overdoses exceeds the number who die from motor vehicle crashes, as well as suicide, breast cancer, colon cancer, firearms, influenza, or HIV.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Public Health Services, the rate of opioid overdose deaths in Wisconsin nearly doubled, from 5.9 deaths per 100,000 residents in 2006 to 10.7 deaths per 100,000 residents in 2015. Furthermore, opioid-related hospital visits in Wisconsin, which include both inpatient hospitalizations and emergency department visits, have doubled over the last decade. In 2015, there were nearly six hospital stays involving opioids for every death involving opioids. Jackson County, for example, had 114 opioid-related hospital visits in 2016.

Apart from the toll on human life, the crisis has financially strained the services the counties provide its residents and employees. Human services, social services, court services, law enforcement services, the office of the coroner/medical examiner and health services, including hospital, emergency and

ambulatory services, have all been severely impacted by the crisis. For example, as a direct and foreseeable consequence of the defendants' egregious conduct, the counties have paid, and continue to pay, millions of dollars for health care costs that stem from prescription opioid dependency. These costs include unnecessary and excessive opioid prescriptions, substance abuse treatment services, ambulatory services, emergency department services, and inpatient hospital services, among others. The defendants' conduct also caused the counties to incur substantial economic, administrative and social costs relating to opioid addiction and abuse, including criminal justice costs, victimization costs, child protective services costs, lost productivity costs, and education and prevention program costs among others.

The lawsuit alleges the defendants sought to create a false perception in the minds of physicians, patients, health care providers and health care payors that using opioids to treat chronic pain was safe for most patients and that the drugs' benefits outweighed the risks. This was allegedly perpetrated through a civil conspiracy involving a coordinated, sophisticated and highly deceptive (unbranded to evade the extensive regulatory framework governing branded communications) promotion and marketing campaign that began in the late 1990s, became more aggressive around 2006, and is ongoing. Specifically, the complaint details how the defendants allegedly poured significant financial resources into generating articles, continuing medical education courses and other "educational" materials, conducting sales visits to doctors, and supporting a network of professional societies and advocacy groups – all of which were successful in the intended purpose of creating a new and phony "consensus" supporting the long-term use of opioids.

The Wisconsin lawsuit follows similar, ongoing actions filed by Simmons Hanly Conroy on behalf of counties across the country. In addition to Wisconsin, Simmons has also filed similar lawsuits in New York, Louisiana, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Illinois.

About Crueger Dickinson

Crueger Dickinson LLC is one of Wisconsin's leading law firms focusing on high stakes litigation. The firm is located in Milwaukee, WI and litigates high exposure, high dollar cases in federal and state courts both in Wisconsin and around the country. Its partners have decades of experience litigating complex cases including class and mass actions and cases involving products liability, patent, ERISA, and business matters. The firm focuses on complex disputes and trial readiness. Read more at www.cruegerdickinson.com

About Simmons Hanly Conroy, LLC

Simmons Hanly Conroy LLC is one of the nation's largest mass tort law firms. Primary areas of litigation include asbestos and mesothelioma, pharmaceutical, consumer protection, environmental, sexual abuse litigation and personal injury. The firm's attorneys have been appointed to leadership in numerous national multidistrict litigations, including Vioxx, Yaz, Toyota Unintended Acceleration and DePuy Pinnacle. The firm also represents small and mid-size corporations, inventors and entrepreneurs in matters involving business litigation. Offices are located in New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, and Alton, Ill. Read more at www.simmonsfirm.com.

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