

San Francisco Walgreens Opioid Litigation Documents at a Glance

In 2018, the city of San Francisco sued Walgreens as well as drug manufacturers and distributors for their roles in creating a “public nuisance” by worsening the opioid epidemic. All the other defendants settled for a total of \$114 million. By the time of closing arguments, Walgreens was left as the sole defendant.

A federal judge ruled in August 2022 that Walgreens can be held responsible for contributing to San Francisco’s opioid crisis, citing failure to track opioid prescriptions as required by the Controlled Substances Act and an over-emphasis on filling prescriptions, preventing pharmacists from vetting physicians.

This is the first bench trial to decide in the plaintiff’s favor in the national opioid litigation, as well as the first bench trial to hold Walgreens liable.

Walgreens is the Retail Pharmacy USA Division of Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc., a publicly traded pharmacy, healthcare, and retail company with locations across the U.S., Europe, and Latin America. Walgreens is one of the largest drugstore chains in the U.S., with approximately 9,000 stores and 17 distribution centers.

Selected Background Resources

- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. (2022). [Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law Regarding Walgreens.](#)

Court decision by Judge Charles R. Breyer for City and County of San Francisco, et al., v. Purdue Pharma L.P., et al., Case No. 3:18-cv-07591-CRB.

- City Attorney of San Francisco. (2022, Aug 10). [San Francisco wins landmark opioid trial against Walgreens.](#)

Announces the decision holding Walgreens responsible for its contributions to the opioid epidemic. Explains how San Francisco specifically has been affected by over-prescribing of opioids.

- PBS NewsHour. (2022, Aug 10). [Judge says Walgreens contributed to San Francisco's opioid crisis.](#)

Reports on the judge's ruling and notes Walgreens' plan to appeal. Contextualizes the case within the larger landscape of opioid lawsuits, noting that pharmacy chains have been sued less often than opioid manufacturers and distributors.