

Bereaved Mom Hunts Purdue Pharma Execs

September 12th, 2007 7:53 am By Ed Silverman



Marianne Skolek is angry, and she won't rest until the individuals who she believes are responsible for her daughter's death are punished. In her view, those individuals are the execs at Purdue Pharma, which sells OxyContin. In 2002, her 29-year-old daughter was prescribed the painkiller for a herniated disk and wound up dying of heart failure, leaving behind a 6-year-old son.

Since then, she set up a web site - [oxydeaths](#) - to rally others who lost loved ones to the painkiller. She testified before a Senate committee. And she traveled to Virginia earlier this year in an unsuccessful bid to convince a federal judge to sentence three Purdue execs to jail time. The parent company and the execs had already agreed to pay a combined [\\$634.5 million in fines](#).

So now, Skolek is going after them. She wants Howard Udell, Purdue's top lawyer, disbarred, and Paul Goldenheim, formerly Purdue's medical director, to have his medical license revoked. So she's filed a grievance against Udell in Connecticut, where Purdue is based, and it's been referred to the state panel ([take a look here](#)). New York also wrote back about taking "appropriate action," she says, but we don't yet have a copy of that letter to share with you.

"I want to do whatever is in my power to bring justice to Jill (her daughter) as well as the thousands of victims of these guys and their company," Skolek tells Pharmalot. "If they're not going to get prison time, there are other avenues to prosecute them for what they've done. And this is my mission."

For those keeping score, Udell agreed to pay \$8 million, Goldenheim paid \$7.5 million and Michael Friedman, Purdue's president, paid \$19 million to settle charges of misleading doctors and patients about Oxycontin risks. Each also paid a \$5,000 criminal fine. But paying the money may have been the easy part. Skolek is forging a path that holds high-ranking individuals accountable for improperly promoting meds. Pharma execs, she says, are now on notice