

Losing a Loved One to *Hillybilly Heroin* - OxyContin -

Marianne Skolek for Salem-News.com

I will work very hard to have OxyContin reclassified for severe pain and in the process make Purdue Pharma shudder. I do it for my daughter Jill and the scores of victims of OxyContin.

(MYRTLE BEACH, S.C.) - For the past seven plus years I have been learning everything I can about Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin, and what I have learned has caused me to know the true meaning of the word evil.

Marianne Skolek

You see seven years ago, I lost my only daughter - Jill at 29-years old. She had the misfortune of being prescribed OxyContin for a herniated disc.

I set out to determine how a drug nicknamed "hillbilly heroin" could be killing and addicting so many people in every state in the country, as well as Canada.

I worked with Attorney Generals, Congressmen, Senators, Departments of Justice, the DEA and the FDA as well as private attorneys and the media. When Purdue Pharma was charged (and pled guilty) to marketing OxyContin as less likely to be addictive or abused in Federal Court in Virginia in July 2007, I was asked by the US Attorney prosecuting the case to make a statement in front of the courtroom.

I did it with the three CEO's (Michael Friedman, Paul Goldenheim and Howard Udell) who were put on probation and given community service hours at a drug rehab facility glaring at me. I also went to Washington, DC and testified against them in front of a Judiciary Hearing of the U.S. Senate.

I thought my work was over and that a \$10 billion privately held pharmaceutical company would discontinue their less than honest marketing of OxyContin. I was wrong -- very wrong.

In 2008, Purdue Pharma began to very subtly market OxyContin for something called "pregnancy pain". They didn't stop there. They marketed for the "undertreatment of pain in newborns and pediatric patients" on their website.

I reported them to the FDA and the DEA and believe I used the words -- "this company is marketing a very addictive and dangerous drug to the most vulnerable of people".

There was no doubt in my mind that Purdue Pharma had no conscience. They pulled this marketing tactic, but I have no doubt that they will try it again when things calm down for them and they feel they can get away with it.

Regarding physician perceptions of female patients with pain, Hadjistavropoulos and colleagues found that physicians distinguished between their "attractive and unattractive" patients. Attractive female patients were perceived as experiencing less pain than unattractive female patients, evidencing a "healthy is beautiful" stereotype.

Recently I came across the below posting on Purdue Pharma's Partners Against Pain website --

Regarding physician perceptions of female patients with pain, Hadjistavropoulos and colleagues found that physicians distinguished between their "attractive and unattractive" patients. Attractive female patients were perceived as experiencing less pain than unattractive female patients, evidencing a "healthy is beautiful" stereotype.

My hope is that the FDA and the DEA find this insult to physicians as offensive as I have found it to be -- and they do something about it and in doing so send a very strong message to Purdue Pharma -- We've had enough!

I recognize that Massachusetts Senator Tolman is conducting OxyContin hearings since the state has been so hard hit by deaths and addictions. But hearings are not going to save lives -- definitive and strong action will though. I am calling upon the FDA to reclassify OxyContin for "severe" pain only -- and no longer to be prescribed for "moderate" pain.

A strong message needs to be sent that lives -- especially of our young people -- are more important than Purdue Pharma's profits. I intend to send that message loudly and clearly for the victims of OxyContin who cannot be heard.

I had a dear friend send me a plaque which reads "Live your life in such a way that when your feet hit the floor in the morning, Satan shudders and says -- Oh Hell -- She's awake!"

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