



Press Release

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Native American Tribes Agree to Opioid Settlement

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On Feb. 1, 2022, Johnson & Johnson, and the nation's three largest drug distributors agreed to settle opioids-related claims by Native American tribes for nearly \$600 million.

Although all federally recognized tribes in the U.S. will be able to participate in the settlements, even if they did not sue over opioids, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes have been involved with other claimant tribes in pursuing litigation claims since early 2018.

“My administration made it a priority early on in my first administration to address the opioid crisis that was occurring in Indian Country,” Cheyenne and Arapaho Gov. Reggie Wassana said. “Along with my general counsel, myself, and Lt. Gov. Miles, we met with outside legal counsel in early 2018 and made the decision the tribe would join with other tribes in pursuing claims against the drug distributors that we felt flooded our Cheyenne and Arapaho territory with opioids that many of our tribal citizens became addicted to.”

It is not known how much each tribe will receive, other than the Cherokee Nation who litigated their own separate case and settlement last year.

“From what we understand, now that the number has been decided, there is a small group who will drill down into what the allocation methodology should be and start solidifying each tribe’s allocation. This will take some time but should be within the next several months,” Gov. Wassana said.

With the current Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ 13,000 tribal citizens, whatever allocation the tribe receives will help in their efforts to address the damages

caused by opioid addiction and will fit in with a reintegration grant the tribe recently received along with the Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Project the tribe implemented in May 2021.

Under the deal, Johnson & Johnson would pay \$150 million over two years. AmerisourceBergen McKesson and Cardinal would contribute \$440 million in total over seven years.

“We also anticipate the other manufacturers/distributors to enter into similar agreements over the next several months,” Gov. Wassana stated.

For more information, contact the communications office at (405) 422-7928.