

Allegation: January 2001 Time Magazine Article

Massachusetts AG FAC ¶185:

185. When *Time* magazine published an article about OxyContin deaths in New England, Purdue employees told Richard Sackler they were concerned. Richard responded with a message to his staff. He wrote that *Time's* coverage of people who lost their lives to OxyContin was not “balanced,” and the deaths were the fault of “the drug addicts,” instead of Purdue. “We intend to stay the course and speak out for people in pain – who far outnumber the drug addicts abusing our product.”

Sackler wrote to Purdue executives: “This is not too bad. It could have been far worse.”⁷⁹ The next week, on February 14, a mother wrote a letter to Purdue.⁸⁰

“My son was only 28 years old when he died from Oxycontin on New Year’s Day. We all miss him very much, his wife especially on Valentines’ Day. Why would a company make a product that strong (80 and 160 mg) when they know they will kill young people?”⁸¹ A *Massachusetts* back and could have taken Motrin but Kodin, then Oxycontin then Oxycontin

ability issue here. Any suggestions?”⁸¹

and Sackler wrote down his solution to the overwhelming

and stigmatize people who become addicted to opioids.

we have to hammer on the abusers in every way possible.

They are reckless criminals.”⁸² Richard followed that

millions from selling addictive drugs, and blame the

to become addicted. By their misconduct, the Sacklers

in every way possible. And the stigma they used as a

’s February 14 letter, the Sacklers achieved a long-

New York Times reported that “OxyContin’s sales have hit \$1

same article noted that “OxyContin has been a factor in

medical examiners are still counting.”⁸³

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08801151727.

⁷⁹ 2001-02-14 email from James Heins, #3072810.1.

⁸⁰ 2001-02-01 email from Richard Sackler, PDD8801133516.

⁸¹ 2001-03-05 article in *New York Times*, PDD9316101737.

One-Page Memo Discussing January 2001 Time Magazine Article

Dear Colleagues,

Some of you have expressed concern about an article in this week's *Time* magazine, "The Potent Perils of a Miracle Drug," which unfortunately emphasizes the abuse and diversion rather than the therapeutic qualities of our leading product, OxyContin®.

We were aware that this article was in the works, and we tried to make the reporter understand our messages about the need for treating people in pain. Unfortunately, we didn't succeed, and the article presents anything but a balanced account.

However, the same issue of *Time* included a positive story about the new JCAHO pain standards in its "Your Health" column - bringing a certain amount of fair balance to that publication. ...

As OxyContin® tablets continues to expand its market share, we are bound to become an even larger target for sensational reports in the media. Nevertheless, **we intend to stay the course and speak out for people in pain - who far outnumber the drug addicts abusing our product.** We cannot allow ourselves to be discouraged by negative press as we continue to focus upon our noble mission.

Richard S. Sackler, M.D.

- No suggestion "deaths were the fault of 'the drug addicts'"

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Dr. David Haddox, Purdue's Senior Medical Director, Health Policy, has written a Letter to the Editor of *Time* in which he expresses the points we hoped would have been included in a more balanced article. We expect a similar letter to be written by the American Pain Foundation, on behalf of the "pain community."

I believe that the negative impact of the *Time* article will be more than offset by a significant number of balanced, accurate articles that have appeared in other publications and on television programs in the past week or so. As you may know, the new JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) pain standards went into effect on January 1, which explains the unusual amount of attention that this subject is receiving.

The Library has compiled highlights of this excellent media coverage for our Intranet site. Several positive articles, along with Dr. Haddox's Letter to the Editor, can be accessed at the following URL: <http://web.pharma.com/painnews.htm>

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