

Testimony of

Marianne Skolek

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My name is Marianne Skolek. I had a beautiful 29 year old daughter named Jill. She had the misfortune of being prescribed OxyContin in January 2002 and was killed on April 29, 2002. Jill left behind her son Brian who was 6 years old at the time of his mom's death. Brian is with me in the Senate today.

Why did a \$9 billion privately held pharmaceutical corporation take the life of my precious daughter? My work against Purdue Pharma for the past 5 years initially focused on J. David Haddox, dentist turned psychiatrist and Senior Medical Director of Purdue Pharma. I also focused on Robin Hogen, former Public Relations spokesman for Purdue Pharma.

In 1996, the American Academy of Pain Medicine and the American Pain Society issued a set of guidelines for the use of opiates in the treatment of chronic pain. These guidelines are referred to as a "consensus statement." The statement leaning toward a more liberal use of opiates was adopted just as the marketing push for OxyContin began. This consensus statement was produced by a task force, which was headed by J. David Haddox, former president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine, who was senior medical advisor for Purdue Pharma - the maker of OxyContin. Haddox was quoted as saying that "the point was to gather consensus. If you are going to do this, this is how it should be done." There was question as to whether it was ethical for Haddox to be associated with a pharmaceutical manufacturer to guide the formation of a document that would play a key role in promoting the use of products made by the company - Purdue Pharma.

When OxyContin was introduced on the market, it was intended for the treatment of cancer patients and they were losing the patent on MS Contin. At one point, in the greed and sheer evil of Purdue Pharma, they intended to market OxyContin to OB/GYN patients. I flooded the country with emails and faxes to Attorney Generals and the media reporting that we had enough devastation in the country without addicting infants to OxyContin. This marketing ploy was terminated by Purdue Pharma.

Pain patients from various pain societies will speak of the merits of OxyContin and their quality of life being restored because of the drug. These pain societies throughout the country - are funded by Purdue Pharma. Let the pain patients not a part of any funded pain society of Purdue Pharma speak about the quality of life they have after becoming addicted to OxyContin - and when their physicians refuse to renew prescriptions for the drug - and they go on the street to buy the drug because they can't kick the habit of this less addictive drug. Ask the FDA and the DEA why OxyContin is in such plentiful supply on the streets all over the country.

Jill and thousands of victims of an out of control, greedy pharmaceutical company headed by three convicted criminals marketed OxyContin as less likely to be addictive and abused. There are assertions that the only victims in the criminal activities of Purdue Pharma were the physicians who were misled by Purdue Pharma's sales representatives. The physicians, who were used as pawns by Purdue Pharma, were not ingesting a powerful narcotic that was being marketed as less likely to be addictive or abused - the patients were ingesting OxyContin and were becoming addicted and dying. If patients aren't victims of Purdue Pharma's criminal activities, tell me what they should be called.

The addictions and loss of lives because of OxyContin continue to impact every state in the country every single day. The far reaching consequences of the criminal activity of Purdue Pharma did not end in 2001 or 2002 as they would like it to be believed - no one can turn the clock back. This has been allowed to become a national crisis because there was no conscience in the marketing of OxyContin - there was only greed.

We all hear on the news every day about individuals who work for government agencies or private industry who embezzle funds. Purdue Pharma has been found criminally responsible for marketing OxyContin which resulted in death and addiction. Is it justice to have these convicted criminals - these monsters - fined an amount of money that is very well afforded by them, or will the Senate send a message that because of the magnitude of the crime committed, they deserve to be further investigated by the Senate.

Anything that is imposed against these convicted criminals will not give us back Jill, but I will guarantee that Purdue Pharma will never forget the name Jill Skolek. When I began my work at exposing these three convicted criminals and Haddox and Hogen, I told Hogen that you messed with the wrong mother - and they did because my work is not over.

I want to know why the FDA allowed OxyContin to cause such destruction to the lives of scores of innocent victims. I want to know why 12 warning letters were sent by the FDA to Purdue Pharma about their marketing of OxyContin and to this day, they are not required to put "highly addictive" or "addictive" on the label of the drug. I want to know why the FDA deleted without reading so many of my emails about the marketing of OxyContin until this last month. I want to know why Curtis Wright while employed by the FDA played an intricate part in the approval of OxyContin and then was hired by Purdue Pharma. I want to know why Attorney General Blumenthal of Connecticut's Citizen Petition which requests strengthened warnings for OxyContin as a result of information they uncovered in their investigation against Purdue Pharma has been sitting at the FDA - without any action - since January 2004. I want to know how Rudy Guliani could be the "big star" hired by Purdue Pharma to play down the abuse and diversion of OxyContin and also get paid by the DEA for work performed for them. I want to know why the Sackler family has not been held accountable for their involvement with Purdue Pharma and the mass marketing of OxyContin.

Eventually Purdue Pharma will introduce another blockbuster drug similar to OxyContin and as they did with another devastating drug called Palladone. Palladone was removed from the market after a couple of months. I like to think that my faxes and emails all over the country played an intricate part in having it removed. My advice to Purdue Pharma is when you are ready to introduce another drug such as OxyContin or Palladone, look behind you, because I will be right there.

I will be working at having Howard Udell disbarred for his criminal activities and Paul Goldenheim's medical license revoked for what amounts to white collar drug trafficking. I will be actively working at Friedman, Udell and Goldenheim never being able to work in the pharmaceutical industry again because they are convicted criminals who criminally marketed OxyContin. I will accomplish this - hopefully with the help of Attorney General Blumenthal -- do not doubt me at not being successful at achieving this.

Her name was Jill Carol Skolek. She did not deserve to be prescribed OxyContin and die because of the criminal activities of individuals of Purdue Pharma . Please give my family justice and investigate the criminal activity of Purdue Pharma .

Thank you Senators for giving me the opportunity to speak for thousands of victims of an out of control pharmaceutical corporation.