AG Balderas Secures Key Victory in Massive Opioid Litigation; Lawsuit Will be Heard in New Mexico instead of a Federal Court of a $200 Billion Dollar Corporation’s Choosing

Albuquerque, NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas announced a key victory in New Mexico's lawsuit against major opioid manufacturers and distributors—the case will be tried in New Mexico state court. Late Tuesday, a federal judge ruled that Attorney General Balderas’ lawsuit must be returned to the state court where it was originally filed. On April 25 of this year, McKesson Corporation, a pharmaceutical distributor that reported 2017 revenues of nearly $200 billion, removed New Mexico's case to federal court in an attempt to sweep New Mexico into a growing federal multi-district litigation currently overseen by a federal judge in Ohio. Tuesday’s ruling effectively terminates that attempt, returning New Mexico's case to state district court and all but ensuring that the case will be tried before a New Mexico state judge and a New Mexico jury who understand our unique state, population and way of life.

"I’m pleased the federal court saw through the multi-billion dollar corporation’s ploy so quickly and sent our case back to Santa Fe where it belongs, but this delay unquestionably cost us lives and desperately needed funds to combat New Mexico’s opioid epidemic," said Attorney General Hector Balderas, whose Consumer and Environmental Protection Division is overseeing the lawsuit. "I fully expect these companies to fight us every step of the way and use every dirty trick in the book, but in the end our office will hold them accountable to help repair the damage they've caused to New Mexican children, families and entire communities.

According to New Mexico Department of Health statistics, nearly five hundred New Mexicans lost their lives to drug overdose in 2016, and two out of every three of those overdoses involved opioids.

Parallel with his litigation efforts, Attorney General Balderas has also been involved in a nationwide effort to negotiate a settlement with the opioid industry, an effort that he characterizes as vitally important, but slow and complicated. Additionally, Attorney General Balderas created Project OPEN: Opioid Prevention & Education Network which continues to train and educate New Mexicans about combatting the opioid epidemic around the state.

# # #