

# Opioid Epidemic Lawsuits Take Strategy from Epic Big Tobacco Litigation

Thousands of lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies, prescription drug distributors and pharmacy retailers for their role in causing the opioid epidemic are based on the legal strategy honed 20 years ago in epic litigation against the tobacco industry, said **Fears Nachawati Law Firm** trial lawyer **Jonathan Novak** in a special appearance on the Lawyer 2 Lawyer podcast.

Trial lawyers are demanding that manufacturers and companies along the prescription drug supply chain pay sweeping economic penalties for damages caused by opioid drugs. Attorneys for those harmed by opioids are working to force the companies to pay to stop the scourge of opioid addiction going forward, a course similar to the tobacco litigation in the 1990s, said Novak, who is a former lawyer for the Drug Enforcement Administration with experience investigating abuses by pharmaceutical companies.

“What we’re looking to do is similar to what was done in the tobacco litigation,” Novak said in an appearance on the Legal Talk Network’s Lawyer 2 Lawyer podcast. “We want to hold these parties responsible, and then we want them to pay to fix the problem that they deliberately caused.

“Because of the nature of what these companies did – the ignoring of federal law and state law, the malicious, heartless, thoughtless way these companies pushed opioids, which they knew were addictive – we need to hold them accountable,” he said. “In my work at DEA, one thing I found every single time is that these companies do not have any interest in altruism. They are not going to do what’s right.

We need to make them do that.”