The ramifications of the opioid crisis are only beginning to be felt in the legal community, but their scope is already considerable. Thousands of federal and state lawsuits are currently making the rounds of courts nationwide. And while what may in the moment be focused predominantly on calling to account Big Pharma for the public harms of their deceptive practices, the trial of pain won’t end for years.

The law will also be called upon to deal with lingering effects of the opioid epidemic as substance abuse disorders continue to mount, social services and hospitals strain to contain the damage, drug-related offenses burden the criminal justice system, and legislators and policymakers confront their previous neglect and the need for reform.

This graphic snapshot offers a glimpse of the epidemic’s debris-strewn landscape awaiting cleanup.

BY VICKI SANDERS

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Opioids, prescriptions, and street drugs are all known by a variety of names. The word “opioid” is employed to identify natural or semi-synthetic substances that are associated with pain relief. More than 200 other names are used to refer to this class of drugs.

Some people begin taking prescription opioids to manage pain after a surgery or injury, some to manage chronic pain.

Slowly comes the reckoning.

BY NICK LASDERS

The Opioid Saga

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Opinion use disorders, or opioid addiction, is a medical condition that can affect any race, gender, income level, or social class. Some people begin taking prescription opioids to manage pain after a surgery or injury, some to manage chronic pain. No matter what circumstance, prescription opioids are addictive and dangerous.

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