

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-A090
Title: Allies for Recovery in the Episcopal Church
Proposer: Task Force to Respond to Opioid Epidemic
Topic: Substance Abuse

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-C037 Commit to a Comprehensive Response to the Opioid Epidemic

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

1991-D172 Make the Problem of Alcohol and Drug Addiction a Program Priority
1985-A083 Adopt Church Policy on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
1973-D037 Examines Ministry to Those Suffering from Addiction

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

A090 - Allies for Recovery in the Episcopal Church

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force to Respond to Opioid Epidemic

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: Yes

Cost: \$40,000.00

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 08 - Social Justice & United States Policy

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention urge all dioceses and parishes in The Episcopal Church to include www.generalconvention.org/sites/opioid-task-force on websites and encourage training, advocacy, and pastoral care resources for individuals, families, and communities affected by opioid addiction; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses and parishes designate persons within their region to be trained as Recovery Allies, encourage Naloxone training for members, and disseminate the SAMSHA Toolkit (available on website) to clergy and lay leaders; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church to continue advocacy for the federal government of the United States to address this as public health crisis, affirming that opioid use disorder is a disease, which needs adequate resources for treatment options; and be it further

Resolved, That the Church recognize that issues of substance use disorders, access to diagnosis and effective treatment, and lack of appropriate treatment for untreated or undertreated pain affect all communities, and there is a disproportionate effect on persons of color, persons with disabilities, and those affected by poverty; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be urged to pray weekly during the Prayers of the People for those affected by substance use disorders and their families; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention designate an existing office to oversee website management, partner with seminaries and other organizations for Recovery Ally training, and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$40,000 for implementation of this resolution.

Explanation

The 2018-C037 Task Force on Responding to the Opioid Epidemic met over the course of 2.5 years to create resources, explore best ways for dioceses and parishes to respond pastorally and as advocates for recovery, and to conduct a survey of response needs throughout the church. Based on the survey, research, and meetings of the task force members, there is a need for useful science-based strategies for combating the disease of addiction in communities. As many survey respondents noted a need for resources and training to better support the recovery needs in their communities, the Task Force curated resources and encouraged those engaged in Ally Training opportunities. Seabury Seminary is offering an online Recovery Ally Training in the Spring of 2021, and the Task Force encourages similar offerings throughout the Church. Additionally, the Task Force encourages all congregations to include intercessions for those in recovery as a part of weekly worship to eliminate stigma and create safe space for families and individuals in recovery.

The following steps are recommended for continuing a robust response to the epidemic of opioid addiction:

(i) all diocesan and parish websites contain a link to the website created by the task force: www.generalconvention.org/sites/opioid-task-force ,

(ii) the management of the website and the administration of Recovery Ally Training be designated to existing offices or standing committees,

(iii) resources be allotted to the offices or standing committees designated with the task of maintaining the website and administering the training.

Much of the work of this Task Force was completed before the COVID-19 pandemic. The public health crisis has intensified the effects of opioid addiction and these recommendations are even more critical as communities face the trauma of loss and seek to care for our siblings in active addiction or in recovery.



Resolution Number: 2018-C037
Title: Commit to a Comprehensive Response to the Opioid Epidemic
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention call all dioceses and parishes in The Episcopal Church to respond to the opioid epidemic with training, pastoral care, advocacy, and liturgy; and be it further

Resolved, That dioceses and parishes be urged to: partner with First Responders and others in the medical community to host trainings on how to administer naloxone in the event of an overdose; partner with other faith communities and recovery programs in their local contexts to offer pastoral care to those affected by this epidemic; partner with other faith leaders to advocate with local and state government regarding policies and laws to promote healing and wholeness for those affected by this epidemic; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention direct the Office of Government Relations of The Episcopal Church to advocate for the federal government of the United States to address this as public health crisis, affirming that opioid use disorder is a disease, which needs adequate resources for treatment options; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to develop additional liturgical resources to address the needs and concerns of those whose lives have been profoundly affected by this epidemic; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention concurrently acknowledge the purpose and value of prescription opioid medications in appropriately treating chronic, intractable, pain; or acute pain resulting from curable, short-term medical conditions; and affirm the work of the medical community to create established medical guidelines supporting people living with pain; and call all dioceses and parishes in The Episcopal Church to partner with the medical community and health nonprofit organizations to understand the realities, risks, and barriers to access to care and effective treatments and cures for people living with chronic conditions and otherwise untreated or undertreated pain; and be it further

Resolved, That the Church recognize that issues of substance use disorders, access to diagnosis and effective treatment, and lack of appropriate treatment for untreated or undertreated pain affect all communities, but especially those marginalized in poverty, racial, gender, and ethnic discrimination, persons with disabilities, and other minority communities; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be urged to include in the Prayers of the People intercessions for patients, families, and communities affected by substance use disorders and also by untreated and undertreated pain and chronic diseases; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention to authorize the Presiding Officers to create a task force to assist in the curation and creation of resources for education, prevention, pastoral care, recovery, advocacy, and partnering with community organizations to be use by dioceses and parishes for the purpose of responding to the opioid epidemic and substance use disorders; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$30,000 for the implementation of this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the membership of this task force will be appointed by the Presiding Officers and consist of no fewer than 8 nor more than 14 members; and that the task force be made up of bishops, priests, deacons, and laity; and be it further
Resolved, That the task force will complete this work within two years.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 691-692.