

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-A189
TITLE: Create Task Force to Develop Process for Substance Abuse Screening
PROPOSER: 15 - Ministry
TOPIC: Structure

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-D014 Evaluate Individuals in the Ordination Process for Addiction Concerns
2009-A079 Request Education in Addiction Issues for Ordained Ministry
2003-A123 Call on Dioceses to Establish Committees on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency
1979-B122 Request Dioceses to Establish Committees on Alcoholism

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
1982-D015 Develop a Church-wide Policy of Education and Response to Alcoholism

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

A189 Create Task Force to Develop Process for Substance Abuse Screening

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Proposer | 15 - Ministry |
| Endorsed by | |
| Sponsored by | |
| Page numbers | Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A |
| HiA / Leg. Cttee | / |
| Current Status | Pre-Filed Resolution |
| Version | Original (as filed) |
| Review Status | Not yet reviewed |

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That a Task Force or similar body be formed to develop a standardized process of screening persons applying for ordination with respect to their history of and experience with alcohol and substance abuse; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, that the Task Force identify best practices for dioceses to follow in evaluating issues of alcohol and substance abuse, including training for Standing Committees, Commissions on Ministry and others involved in the ordination process, as well as training for persons in the ordination process; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the Task Force prepare a report for the 80th General Convention giving recommendations with respect to alcohol and substance abuse for (1) screening processes for dioceses to employ in the ordination process, including how to best evaluate applicants with a history of addictions who are now living in recovery (2) training for Standing Committees, Commissions on Ministry and others involved in the ordination process, including diocesan staff, and (3) training and other appropriate recommendations for persons in the ordination process; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That the Task Force be composed of three Bishops appointed by the Presiding Bishop, at least two of whom have experience in dealing with clergy with a history of alcohol or substance abuse, and six priests, deacons or lay persons appointed by the President of the House of Deputies, at least 3 of whom have relevant experience in the evaluation and treatment of persons with a history of alcohol or substance abuse and at least one of whom serves as a diocesan Transition Officer who has experience in dealing with clergy who have a history of alcohol or substance abuse. At least three members of this Task Force should be persons living in recovery; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That the Task Force also examine a process for identifying other forms of addiction and their potential impact on ministry; and be it further
- 6 *Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Commission on Program,

Budget and Finance allocate \$25,000 to the budget to facilitate the work of the Task Force.

EXPLANATION

In its second enumeration recommendation, the Commission on Impairment and Leadership gave recommendations for screening and evaluation of persons in the ordination process and training for ordinands and others with respect to alcohol and substance abuse:

We recommend that the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies commission a task force or other group to develop a more complete process of screening persons applying for ordination with regard to their history and experience with alcohol and substance abuse. Current practices with regard to screening for alcohol and substance abuse vary widely across dioceses and depend significantly on the thoroughness of the candidate's psychological evaluation and on the bishop's and commission on ministry's awareness and capacity to address these issues. For example, the standard Oxford questionnaire requests information about an individual's financial, criminal, and employment background, but it does not adequately explore an applicant's history of addiction and substance abuse. Bishops and commissions on ministry would benefit from education and training in how best to evaluate applicants with a history of addiction who are now living in recovery.

This resolution gives effect to the second enumerated recommendation of the Commission on Impairment and Leadership.



Resolution Number: 2015-D014
Title: Evaluate Individuals in the Ordination Process for Addiction Concerns
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That Sponsoring Clergy, Vestries, Commissions on Ministry, Standing Committees, and Bishops interviewing and evaluating Nominees, Postulants, and Candidates for Ordination explore directly issues regarding substance use in their lives and family systems; and be it further

Resolved, That Nominees, Postulants, and Candidates who may have addiction issues be offered appropriate resources and referred to qualified mental health, healthcare, and/or addiction professionals for further evaluation prior to proceeding in the ordination process.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 319.



Resolution Number: 2009-A079
Title: Request Education in Addiction Issues for Ordained Ministry
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That every course of study for the ordained ministry of the Church include education in the nature of addiction, in the identification, practices of intervention and treatment of addiction, and in Twelve-Step programs for recovery from addiction; and be it further

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Ministry Development to consider changes to the ordination canons to further promote such study; and be it further

Resolved, That each diocese commit to continue to address the issues of education, prevention, intervention and treatment in support of its congregations, clergy, laity and employees.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 802-803.



Resolution Number: 2003-A123
Title: Call on Dioceses to Establish Committees on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention call on all dioceses to establish Diocesan Committees on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency to provide educational programs for clergy, church staff, and congregations that take account of recent advances in treatment of alcohol and drug dependency, and that such committees address problems related to alcohol or drug dependency in clergy, church staff, and, when requested, laypersons; and be it further
Resolved, That dioceses make strong efforts to develop policies concerning treatment and future employment for diocesan clergy and church staff who are dependent on alcohol or drugs; and be it further
Resolved, That dioceses make strong efforts to ensure that health care insurance for diocesan clergy and church staff includes adequate coverage for mental health and addiction, particularly inpatient treatment for dependency on alcohol or drugs.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 340f.



Resolution Number: 1979-B122
Title: Request Dioceses to Establish Committees on Alcoholism
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church request each Diocese of the Church to form a Committee on Alcoholism, working under the guidance of the Bishop and including in its membership representatives from the Clergy and Laity, and if possible, both recovering alcoholics and non-alcoholics. Each Diocesan committee hopefully would work in conjunction with local and regional health resources, councils on alcoholism and the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous to provide materials for education and training on the subject of alcoholism and alcohol abuse and its effect on the quality of life of human beings. Each Diocese is requested through its Committee on Alcoholism, to develop a written policy on alcoholism which will:

- a. Address the issues of education, prevention, intervention and treatment;*
- b. Provide a written procedure for treatment of Clergy and Diocesan employees and members of their families who suffer from the illness of alcoholism;*
- c. Include in its policy a statement covering the use of alcoholic beverages at Church functions and/or on Church property, with particular emphasis on the provision of non-alcoholic choices;*
- d. Provide an employees policy statement which includes assurances of job security and insurance coverage for those completing a prescribed course of alcoholic treatment;*
- e. Provide help or encouragement for Clergy and Lay persons working with alcoholics and their families; and be it further*

Resolved, That the Executive Council of the General Convention also comply with provisions b, c, and d, as they relate to the staff of the Executive Council of the General Convention.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 1979* (New York: General Convention, 1980), p. C-114.