

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D057
TITLE: Impairment Commission - Training on Alcohol and Substance Misuse
PROPOSER: Mr. William Powel
TOPIC: Substance Abuse

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A158 Adopt Policy on Alcohol and Other Substance Misuse
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

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

2015-A159 Promote a Healing Ministry to Those Affected by Addiction
1991-D171 Support Educational Programs on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
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

D057 Impairment Commission - Training on Alcohol and Substance Misuse

Proposer	Mr. William Powel
Endorsed by	Getz, Ms. Pauline; Freeman, Ms. Jane
Sponsored by	
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HiA / Leg. Cttee	HD / 16 - Churchwide Leadership
Current Status	Resolution Filed
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RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention directs the Executive Council to take the necessary steps to develop a mandatory training program with respect to alcohol and substance misuse (to be renewed at designated intervals) for all persons in the process of formation for ordination and for all priests and deacons currently licensed, with the goal that those in the formation process and all clergy would:
1. Be trained in prior resolutions of the General Convention regarding impairment;
 2. Recognize impairment; and
 3. Provide tools for reporting incidents involving impaired clergy and remove barriers that impede individuals from reporting.
- 2 *Resolved*, That the Executive Council consider using training materials through publicly available resources at no cost, such as The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (samhsa.gov).

EXPLANATION

The above recommendation was included in the report of the Commission on Leadership and Impairment (“Commission”), which was formed by resolution of the House of Bishops on March 17, 2015. The resolution “requested that the Presiding Bishop appoint, in consultation of the House of Deputies, an independent commission to explore the canonical, environmental, behavioral, and procedural dimensions of matters involving the serious impairment of individuals serving as leaders in the Church, with special attention to issues of addiction and substance abuse.”

The Commission issued its report in March, 2017, which offered the following definition of impairment: “The inability to exercise ministry with reasonable skills and safety by virtue of physical or mental illness, inebriation, or excessive use of drugs, narcotics, alcohol, chemicals, or other substances.” (Report, p. 2).

The Commission stated that “[u]nnamed and unaddressed impairment of leaders causes damage with and beyond the body of Christ. The Commission has discovered that in many instances, church polity has impeded the ability of the Church to intervene, assess and treat impaired people and care for the injured community.” (Report, p. 4).

In offering the above recommendation, the Commission concluded that “the investment in creating such a program, reflecting current research and best practices with regard to addiction and substance abuse, would yield a significant return in the health and wholeness of the church’s leadership. The program could be modeled in part on the Church Pension Group’s ‘Safeguarding’ curriculum.” (Report, p. 17).



Resolution Number: 2015-A158
Title: Adopt Policy on Alcohol and Other Substance Misuse
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention acknowledge The Episcopal Church's long-standing tolerance for the use of alcohol which, in some cases, has contributed to its misuse, and has undermined a climate of wholeness and holiness for all; that our Church culture too often avoids hard conversations about alcohol use, and the role of forgiveness and compassion in healing and recovery; and that The Episcopal Church now commits to create a new normal in our relationship with alcohol. We aspire to be a place in which conversations about alcohol, substance misuse, or addiction are not simply about treatment but about renewal, justice, wholeness, and healing. We affirm that Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church has long been and continues to be a valuable resource for this work; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th Convention adopt the following policy on alcohol and other substance misuse and encourage dioceses, congregations, seminaries, schools, young adult ministries, and affiliated institutions to update their policies on the use of alcohol and other substances with the potential for misuse. These policies should consider the following:

- 1. The Church must provide a safe and welcoming environment for all people, including people in recovery.**
- 2. All applicable federal, state and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.**
- 3. Some dioceses and congregations may decide not to serve alcohol at events or gatherings. Others may decide to permit a limited use of alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored events. Both can be appropriate if approached mindfully.**
- 4. When alcohol is served, it must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served. Whenever alcohol is served, the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge must appoint an adult to oversee its serving. That adult must not drink alcoholic beverages during the time of his or her execution of his or her responsibilities. If hard liquor is served, a certified server is required.**
- 5. Serving alcoholic beverages at congregational events where minors are present is strongly discouraged. If minors are present, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times to prevent underage drinking.**
- 6. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol does not need to be labeled provided the alcohol is completely evaporated by the cooking process; however, it is recommended that even in this case the use of alcohol in cooking be noted on a label.**
- 7. Whenever alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.**
- 8. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, e.g. "wine and cheese reception," "cocktail party," and "beer and wine tasting."**

9. Ministries inside or outside of congregations will make certain that alcohol consumption is not the focus of the ministry and that drinking alcohol is not an exclusively normative activity.

10. Food must be served when alcohol is present.

11. The groups or organizations sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the clergy or the vestry. Such groups or organizations must also assume responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated and must provide alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may be impaired. Consulting with liability insurance carriers is advised.

12. Recognizing the effects of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, alcoholic beverages shall not be served when the business of the Church is being conducted.

13. Clergy shall consecrate an appropriate amount of wine when celebrating the Eucharist and perform ablutions in a way that does not foster or model misuse.

14. We encourage clergy to acknowledge the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind and consider providing non-alcoholic wine.; and be it further

Resolved, That, mindful of the emerging legalization of other addictive substances and the increasing rise of addiction, the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church provide for the ready availability, implementation, and continuing development of this policy church-wide, in consultation and coordination with Recovery Ministries of The Episcopal Church.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 909-910.



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.