

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

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D058
TITLE: Impairment Commission - Rapid Response Team for Crisis Intervention
PROPOSER: Mr. William Powel
TOPIC: Substance Abuse

Directly Related: (Attached)

2012-A066 On the Topic of Canon III.9 [Of the Life and Work of Priests] (Rejected)
2003-A123 Call on Dioceses to Establish Committees on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency
1985-A083 Adopt Church Policy on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

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

2015-A158 Adopt Policy on Alcohol and Other Substance Misuse
2015-A159 Promote a Healing Ministry to Those Affected by Addiction
2009-A079 Request Education in Addiction Issues for Ordained Ministry
1991-D172 Make the Problem of Alcohol and Drug Addiction a Program Priority
1982-D015 Develop a Church-wide Policy of Education and Response to Alcoholism
1979-B122 Request Dioceses to Establish Committees on Alcoholism

Supplemental Documents: (Linked)

[Report of the Commission on Impairment and Leadership](#), 2017

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.

D058 Impairment Commission - Rapid Response Team for Crisis Intervention

Proposer	Mr. William Powel
Endorsed by	Getz, Ms. Pauline; Freeman, Ms. Jane
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	HD / 16 - Churchwide Leadership
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RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That The 79th General Convention recommends that the Presiding Bishop, drawing on the research of the Commission on Leadership and Impairment, establish a team of advisors of consultants to serve as a resource on alcoholism and other forms of addiction in order to provide a rapid response to issues of questionable impairment, to provide clergy or other concerned individuals with confidential advice, and to assist with monitoring, recovery and re-entry into ministry.

EXPLANATION

The above recommendation was included in the report of the Commission on Leadership and Impairment (“Commission”) (page 19), 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).

The Commission’s recommendations focused on two broad categories:

Preventive measures, that include creating educational and training programs to increase knowledge about impairment, and also implementing policies, practices, and procedures to screen and evaluate the church’s leaders throughout their vocational life, promoting early detection and quality control along with confidentiality.

Effective responses, that include cultivating knowledge, resources, and practices that support the effective recognition of impairment in leaders along with appropriate inquiry, intervention, and referral for evaluation and treatment, and also providing support for impaired leaders via re-entry, re-licensing, ongoing monitoring, and accountability. (Report, pp 14-15).



Resolution Number: 2012-A066
Title: On the Topic of Canon III.9 [Of the Life and Work of Priests]
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Title III, Canon 9 be amended by adding a new Section 14 as follows:

Sec. 14. Impairment of a Member of the Clergy

(a) If, in the Bishop's judgment, there is sufficient reason to believe that the ministry of a member of the clergy serving a congregation of the diocese is severely impaired by physical, mental or substance abuse-related causes, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to raise this concern with the member of the clergy ~~and the bishop may require a medical and/or psychological assessment.~~

(b) The bishop may require a medical and/or psychological assessment and may provide assistance as necessary. Should an assessment indicate that treatment is necessary, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to provide assistance in making that treatment possible.

(c) Should the Bishop, after laboring to assist the member of the clergy in securing treatment, have reason to believe that the impairment continues to cause distress in the congregation, the bishop shall consult with the vestry to enlist their help on resolution of the matter; and if, in the Bishop's judgment, the matter is not resolved, then to present this concern to the Standing Committee and request that an independent assessment be made of the relationship of the member of the clergy and the congregation.

(d) Should that assessment indicate that the parish is sufficiently threatened by the impairment of the clergy and should the Standing Committee concur by a 2/3 vote with this assessment, the Standing Committee shall recommend a course of action to the bishop, which may include that the pastoral relationship of the priest and congregation be terminated, according to the provisions Section 13.d.6 through Section h.



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: 1985-A083
Title: Adopt Church Policy on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 68th General Convention adopt the following policy statement:

AN EPISCOPAL NATIONAL POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

The Episcopal Church acknowledges the need for exercising a healing ministry and for offering guidance to problem drinkers or chemically dependent persons and to members of their families.

Alcoholism and other drug abuse are recognized as treatable human disorders which are manifested by a three-fold impairment of the body, mind and spirit. The Church concurs with health authorities that alcohol and other substance abuse is a major health concern of our society. It affects not only the alcoholic or abuser's health and self-concept, but also interpersonal relationships with family, co-workers, friends and counselors. It may affect any individual, regardless of financial situation, education, employment, race or creed.

The Church calls on all clergy and lay people to take to heart the seriousness of the illness of alcohol and drug abuse and its manifestations as a disrupter of family, economic and social life; and urges all churchpeople to do everything in their power to offer forth the love of Christ in his healing ministry to those afflicted persons and families.

Diocesan Committees on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency

The General Convention of 1979 encouraged each diocese to appoint a Diocesan Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency to implement a program on alcohol and drug abuse. Such committees are responsible for developing a diocesan policy and planning a diocesan resource center for education, information, counseling and training. Clergy and lay counselors are encouraged to pursue continuing education in these fields. Congregations are encouraged to provide members with educational opportunities to learn more about the nature, prevention, techniques of treatment and pastoral care of alcoholics and drug abusers and their families. Trained consultants should be made available to interested clergy and congregations to facilitate this education process. Through education and usage of appropriate resources, intervention is made possible to stop the progress of the disorder before it runs its full destructive course.

The Church commends and encourages the many programs offering treatment and support to persons suffering from the illnesses of alcoholism and drug addiction. Clergy and vestries are encouraged to further their assistance to the National Episcopal Coalition on Alcohol (NECA), Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, AlaTeen Groups, Adult Children of Alcoholics Groups, Narcotics Anonymous and to chemical dependency programs and halfway houses as well as becoming knowledgeable concerning all local resources offering intervention, treatment and continuing care for these persons.

Employees of the Church

Alcoholic or drug dependent employees of the Church should be treated with pastoral love and concern. Church health insurance policies should include provision for the treatment and care of persons afflicted with these illnesses. Treatment intervention for the person and family along with counseling and continuing support during recovery should be coordinated by the clergy and other support groups in the parish. Every effort should be made to offer job protection and re-employment, with salaried sick leave during hospitalization, to alcoholics and drug abusers accepting treatment. Those refusing treatment will not be offered this protection.

Alcoholic Beverages in the Local Parish

The Episcopal Church has never endorsed prohibiting the use of beverages containing alcohol among adult members. Scripture offers Jesus' example of the use and serving of wine in his first miracle at Cana and in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. If an adult member elects to use alcohol, however, moderate usage is expected. Church members should be educated regarding those conditions that might consequently compromise the health and safety of oneself or others. The Church also supports and has a responsibility to those people who abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages for whatever reason. Many churches do not serve alcoholic beverages at social functions, but, for those which do, the following guidelines are given:

- All applicable federal, state and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
- Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly labeled as such.
- Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility.
- The service of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event.
- The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the parish for this plan. 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 thus be impaired.
- Recognizing the effect of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, it would be advisable to consider the nature of the function at which alcoholic beverages are proposed to be served.
- Chemical usage other than alcohol is clearly controlled under federal, state and local laws and, as such, should be forbidden at any function.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 1985* (New York: General Convention, 1986), p. 135.