

R2019-02: Call to Respond to the Opioid Epidemic

Whereas, Ohio has one of the highest rates of drug overdose deaths in the U.S. and a rising rate of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome or neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome (NOWS), *and*

Whereas, the opioid epidemic affects individuals and families across all boundaries of income, race, age, and gender and is touching members of all congregations in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, *and*

Whereas, family systems and the fabric of community life are being destroyed, *and*

Whereas, the law enforcement, the legal system, jails and healthcare facilities in every community are overwhelmed by a lack of resources to deal with this epidemic; *therefore be it*

Resolved, that the 145th Convention of the Diocese of Southern Ohio reaffirm Resolution C037 of the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church to respond to the opioid epidemic with training, pastoral care, advocacy, and liturgy in congregations in the Diocese of Southern Ohio; *and be it further*

Resolved, that congregations 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, recovery programs, drug courts and programs that support loved ones 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 churches in the Diocese of Southern Ohio 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 by untreated and undertreated pain and chronic diseases.