**Hope and Healing: The Church’s Response to the Opioid Crisis, Addiction and Recovery**

**Presentation to Episcopal Church Women October 19, 2019**

**Background**

In 2018 opioids claimed the lives of 1213 individuals in Virginia, and opioids impacted countless others in our state including those who struggle with addiction, the friends and families whose loved ones fall victim to addiction and the communities where they live. There is much work to be done in alleviating this crisis and we believe the Church is especially suited to respond to the opioid crisis because at our core is our faith in the hope and healing Jesus freely offers to each and every person.

The Diocesan Addiction and Recovery Initiative provides resources and support to equip and empower parishes to respond to issues of addiction and promote avenues to recovery within the communities they serve. By building a network throughout our Diocese we strive to make these resources easily accessible and develop partnerships to offer programs and services throughout the Diocese.

**Diocese Addiction and Recovery Team (DART)**

* Karl Colder, Retired Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration and Co-Chair of the Province III Task Force, Co-Chair Provence III Opioid Response Task Force
* The Rev. Amanda Kotval, St. Paul’s Ivy, Vice Chair of General Convention’s Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic.
* The Rev. Deacon Barbara Ambrose, LCSW, St. Andrew’s Richmond

**Goals of DART:**

* Develop regional network linking parishes, regions, service providers and agencies
* Deliver resources available through Provence III Task Force and other sources.
* Facilitate the development of programs and outreach activities at parish and regional levels.

**The journey so far….**

* In May 2017 Karl Colder made a presentation to the Bishops of Provence three about the opioid crisis and his vision of the church as “First Responder,” this led to…
* The Provence III Opioid Crisis Response Task Force which held its first meeting in September 2017 and included representatives from dioceses in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Deleware, Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia and West Virginia.
* In November 2017 the Diocese of Virginia passed a resolution encouraging parishes to develop ministries addressing the opioid crisis at Convention.
* The Spring 2018 issue of *Virginia Episcopalian Magazine* featured a series of articles by The Rev. Amanda Kotval raising the opioid crisis as a serious issue for our church.
* In July 2018 General Convention established a Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic.
* SpiritWorks opened a recovery center in Warrenton in August 2018. Leeds Church, Markham played a key role in bringing the community together to make this possible.
* In October 2018 the Diocesan Addiction and Recovery Team was established.
* In January 2019 the North Piedmont and Central Richmond Regions initiated pilot programs to establish ministries related to the opioid crisis in their communities.
* In early 2020 we anticipate publishing an article in *Virginia Episcopalian* to highlight activities in our pilot regions and encourage participation by additional parishes.

**Parish and Regional Activities, Programs and Resources to Consider**

* Include prayers, preach sermons and hold special services holding up people who are impacted by the opioid crisis.
* Maintain supply of current addiction and recovery pamphlets.
* Host book discussion (either single event or series) on relevant books such as *Dopesick* or *Dreamland* (This is a relatively easy way to quickly educate people about the background and scope of the current opioid crisis.)
* Host a screening of *Chasing the Dragon*; invite a local professional to lead discussion, answer questions afterward
* Provide meeting space for 12-step or other recovery programs
* Host educational events, series and panel discussions on addiction and recovery topics

**Resources**

*Provisions for the Journey* created by SpiritWorks Foundation. Comprehensive education materials about addiction and recovery and information for family and friends. Includes links to all major resources on these topics <http://www.provisionsforthejourney.org/>

*The Partnership Center: Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services* provides resources and guidance to faith communities. For general information go to <https://www.hhs.gov/partnerships> For a downloadable copy of the toolkit go to

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opioid-epidemic-practical-toolkit-35001-dhhs.pdf>

*Dopesick*: *Dealers, Doctors, and The Drug Company That Addicted America* by Beth Macy, 2018

*Dreamland: The True Tale of America’s Opiate Epidemic* by Sam Quinones, 2015

*Virginia Episcopalian Magazine, Summer 2018,* “The Hour has Come: Time to take Action on the Opioid Epidemic,” by Amanda Kotval. <http://www.thediocese.net/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/Virginia_Episcopalian/VE_summer-2018-final-web.pdf>