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# **Alcohol & Drug Policy**

for the

## **Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania**

Prepared by the

**Addiction Recovery Resource Committee**

**2007**

# ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

of the

## Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

The foundation and framework of this policy is “An Episcopal National Policy on Alcohol and Drug Abuse”, adopted by the 68<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1985. We are also indebted to the work of the Recovery Committee of the Diocese of Delaware.

### PREAMBLE

We believe that the created order is intended by God to nurture humankind physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. These gifts of God’s grace are implicit in the sacramental pilgrimage of each of us. However, we are not always in harmony with the purposes of creation. We recognize that, for some, freedom of the will can become impaired by addiction to alcohol and/or other mood-altering drugs. Despite the destructive nature of this disease, we believe that there is redemptive hope. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and we believe that God can become the cornerstone to health and wholeness for those so afflicted. Therefore, we commend the following principles, guidelines and policies to aid our efforts to understand, respond to and recover from chemical addiction.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

**Addiction is a Disease**—The Diocese of Pennsylvania acknowledges that alcohol and drug abuse is a disease that affects the brain, and it is a major health concern in our society. For this reason, the diocese calls on all clergy and lay people to take to heart the seriousness of alcohol and drug abuse.

**Addiction Destroys Relationships**—Alcohol and drug abuse impairs the body, mind, and spirit of the abuser, thus disrupting supportive relationships with family, friends, and colleagues.

**Addiction is Treatable**—We agree with health authorities that alcohol and drug addiction can affect any individual regardless of social, educational, or financial status. However, the disease is treatable.

**A Healing Ministry is Needed**—Addicted persons, and those who have close relations with them, need guidance to help with this healing ministry.

**Education is Imperative**—We urge parishes to provide opportunities for education and conversation about the use and abuse of alcohol and other mood-altering drugs, as well as the best method to offer support to those who are addicted.

**THE ADDICTION RECOVERY RESOURCE COMMITTEE  
(A.R.R.C.)**

The Addiction Recovery Resource Committee, appointed by the Bishop to address issues surrounding alcoholism and drug dependency, is the successor to the former Addiction and Recovery Committee. The committee's purposes are:

- 1) Developing and implementing an effective diocesan policy on substance abuse and addiction.
- 2) Assisting the Bishop of Pennsylvania and staff in education of and interventions for diocesan clergy and employees who face alcoholism or other chemical addictions.
- 3) Acting as a resource for information regarding treatment facilities and options for those who are considering rehabilitation as well as an aftercare program.

The committee commends and encourages the many programs offering treatment and support to persons suffering from the illness of alcoholism and drug addiction, such as: Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, AlaTeen, Adult Children of Alcoholics, Narcotics Anonymous and various chemical dependency treatment programs and halfway houses. The Recovery Ministry Committee encourages parish and diocesan clergy, employees and leaders to become knowledgeable concerning local resources that offer education, intervention, treatment and continuing care for alcoholism and other chemical addictions.

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**Recommendation: A Policy in Every Parish**

Every vestry in the Diocese of Pennsylvania is urged to adopt, publish and post a written policy concerning the use of alcoholic beverages on church property. Some churches in the diocese have decided not to serve alcohol at church events or other social functions. For those vestries who have decided to permit a limited use of alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored occasions or other events, a sample policy is included on the following page.

## Concerning Alcoholic Beverages in the Parish

The Episcopal Church has never prohibited the use of beverages containing alcohol among its 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. This 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 suggested:

- All applicable federal, state and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
- Alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol does not need to be labeled if the alcohol is evaporated by the cooking process.
- Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility. It is not hospitable to offer only bottled water or sugar-laden drinks as alternatives.
- The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, (e.g., "cocktail party", "beer and wine").
- Food must be served when alcohol is present, and the serving of alcoholic beverages should conclude well before guests are scheduled to leave.
- The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from 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.
- 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 to be served. *A caution: If participants at a church event are paying separately for alcoholic drinks or if the event is publicized to the general public, or if alcohol is not accompanied by a meal, special liability insurance coverage beyond the usual policies of the church will most likely be required. Consult with your insurance carrier well in advance of announcing such an event.*
- The use of other illegal mood-altering substances is forbidden at any function.

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