



CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

JUNE 5, 2014

Prescription Drug and Heroin Addiction in Ohio

"...There are so many situations...throughout the world that require attention, care and love, like the fight against chemical dependency... How many "dealers of death" there are that follow the logic of power and money at any cost! The scourge of drug trafficking, that favours violence and sows the seeds of suffering and death, requires of society as a whole an act of courage. ...It is necessary to confront the problems underlying the use of these drugs, by promoting greater justice, educating young people in the values that build up life in society, accompanying those in difficulty and giving them hope for the future. We all need to look upon one another with the loving eyes of Christ, and to learn to embrace those in need, in order to show our closeness, affection and love.

...To all of you who struggle against drug addiction, and to those family members who share in your difficulties: the Church is not distant from your troubles, but accompanies you with affection. The Lord is near you and he takes you by the hand. Look to him in your most difficult moments and he will give you consolation and hope. And trust in the maternal love of his Mother Mary.... "

Pope Francis, [Blessing a new drug rehabilitation wing at St. Francis of Assisi hospital in Rio de Janeiro](#), 7/25/13

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are deeply saddened to hear stories about the growing epidemic of prescription drug and heroin addiction in communities across Ohio. Such addictions often devastate the lives of individuals and families. The rapid rise of fatal drug overdoses is alarming. This prompts a sense of urgency for all communities to adequately and immediately address this issue of grave concern.

Pray

Our prayers are with individuals and families who struggle with drug addiction. We extend our deepest condolences to those who have lost a family member due to a fatal overdose, and we fervently ask that our loving God grant them healing. We give thanks for courageous and compassionate law enforcement officers, health care providers, counselors, and treatment center staff who encounter the realities and tragic consequences of this epidemic on a daily basis. We ask all people of good will to join us in prayer.

Talk About It

Effectively addressing drug addiction demands that we not avoid it within our own family conversations, as difficult as it may be to talk about. As best as we can, we must keep children informed about the dangers of drug addiction as well as the opportunities for help. To that end, *Start Talking* is a program designed by the state of Ohio to help equip families and communities to clearly communicate the important message of drug prevention. We support this critical initiative and we encourage Ohioans to visit www.starttalking.ohio.gov for details.

Seek treatment

We entreat those dealing with a drug addiction, or those who have a loved one suffering from one, to seek immediate treatment. This is not a time to be judgmental. It is a time to do the right thing and treat the problem as soon as possible before matters are worse.

Get Involved

We urge all Ohioans to support substance abuse and mental health treatment programs in their local communities, and even to bolster them through their networks of faith. Prescription drug and heroin addiction is a community problem and it will take a community to solve it.

We are a people of faith, hope, and love. With God's grace we can address this issue with courage and compassion to heal the wounds of the broken-hearted and overcome this formidable challenge to the well-being of our families and communities.

Start Talking! 
Building a Drug-Free Future

A new effort is underway across Ohio to prevent drug abuse among Ohio's children. [Start Talking!](#) is a statewide program to give parents, guardians, educators and community leaders the tools to start the conversation with Ohio's youth about the importance of living healthy, drug-free lives.