

## Opioid Crisis Facts

Statistics from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, 2015

**Economic Burden of Prescription Opioid Misuse**  
**US\$ 78.5 Bn**  
per year



**Opioid Related Deaths in 2015**  
**33,000**



**Opioid Related Substance Use Disorders in 2015**  
**2 Million**



**Percentage of Patients Misusing Prescription Opioids**  
**21% – 29%**



**Percentage of Patients Developing Opioid Use Disorders**  
**8% – 12%**



**People Consuming Heroin in 2016**  
**948,000**



Statistics from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institutes of Health, 2015

## Responding to the Opioid Crisis with Love

In our Diocese, Bishop Matano and the Diocesan Public Policy Committee are asking our parishes to be part of the solution to the opioid crisis, which is destroying so many thousands of lives in our communities. As part of our continuing series on this issue, here's another aspect of the issue that parishes can get involved in:



Increase Awareness

### INCREASE AWARENESS

According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), addiction is defined as “a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences. It is considered a brain disorder, because it involves functional changes to brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control, and those changes may last a long time after a person has stopped taking drugs.”

Addiction is a lot like other diseases, such as heart disease. Both disrupt the normal, healthy functioning of an organ in the body, both have serious harmful effects, and both are, in many cases, preventable and treatable. If left untreated, they can last a lifetime and may lead to death.”

Increasing awareness of the realities of addiction can help parishioners view people with this problem with greater compassion. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships has developed a helpful resource entitled [Opioid Epidemic Practical Toolkit: Helping Faith and Community Leaders Bring Hope and Healing to Our Communities](#). They suggest that congregations teach parishioners about

**Addiction as a Treatable Disease and Long-Term Chronic Condition:** Help community members understand the need for long-term support of people in recovery.

**Pain Management:** Ask doctors: “Is this an opioid?” “Is an opioid necessary?” “Are there alternatives to using opioids for pain relief?”

(contd.)

**Increasing Awareness (contd.)**

**Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)/ Trauma Informed Approaches:** Help others learn how childhood adversities can... increase a person's risk for substance misuse and challenge their recovery efforts.

**Safe Drug Disposal:** More than half of those who abused prescription painkillers actually obtained them from friends or family. To address this trend, participate and promote "Take Back Drug Days" in your community and help reduce the supply of prescription opioids getting into the wrong hands.

**Good Samaritan Laws:** Invite local law enforcement officials to talk to your group about the laws in your state that may protect those who are providing and/or calling for help when someone has overdosed.



**Share the  
Journey** ✨  
#sharejourney

## STANDING WITH OUR IMMIGRANT SISTERS AND BROTHERS

Pope Francis' two-year campaign [Share the Journey](#) aims to increase our solidarity with migrants and refugees. Here's one action step to take:

**Sign the online petition to your members of Congress:** "I am writing to express my support for poverty-reducing international assistance. Specifically, as the Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations process proceeds, I urge you to oppose any cuts to international assistance and to ensure that the highest levels possible are provided for poverty-reducing accounts that address the root causes of migration and support migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers overseas.

<https://support.crs.org/act/share-journey-12>

### **LABOR DAY PRAYER— Ask your pastor to include this in Masses for September 1- 2**

Loving, Working God, On this Labor Day weekend we ask your special blessing on all people who labor in the workplace or at home, in the U.S. and around the world.

We especially pray for your blessings on workers who do not have jobs and for those whose inadequate pay does not allow them to live the full life you intend for each of us.

Creator God, help us to build a new world in the midst of the old: A world where all workers are valued. A world where those who clean houses are also able to buy houses to live in. A world where those who grow food can also afford to eat their fill.

We pray for the coming of a world where all workers everywhere share in the abundance that you have given us. We ask these things knowing that you give us the courage and strength to live out our faith in the workplace and the marketplace, as well as in the sanctuary. Amen.

*-Written by Edie Rasell, Minister for Economic Justice of the United Church of Christ.*

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