

**GREEK ORTHODOX LADIES PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY, INC.
NATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT
2018-2020**



EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES – OPIOID CRISIS SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair: Arlene Siavelis Kehl
Liaison: Barbara Pasalis
Members: Direct Archdiocesan District – Maritza Pritsos, Irene Paleologos Zervoudis
Metropolis of Boston – Savina Prokopios Davos, Irene Stefanakos
Metropolis of Denver – Elaine Cladis, Georgia Economou Sparto
Metropolis of Atlanta – Valine Georgeson, Vickie Scaljon
Metropolis of Detroit – Theone Dickos, Katherine Kotsis
Metropolis of Pittsburgh – Kathy Lekas, Thea Martin, Barbara Pasalis (Liaison)
Metropolis of San Francisco – Lisa Xanthos, Christine Zeppos
Metropolis of New Jersey – Eleni Constantinides, Diane Saphos, Evellyn Tsiadis
Metropolis of Chicago – Marilyn Jemas, Arlene Siavelis Kehl (Chair), Wanita Loupakos, Katherine Siavelis

August 22, 2020

Addressing the American Opioid Epidemic

As we continue our work to develop a community educational initiative to address the opioid crisis, our important mission remains top of mind. We endeavor to increase awareness of the opioid crisis affecting our families, and to provide valuable information, resources, and tools so we can make a difference in our church communities.

Due to the magnitude of the opioid epidemic and the incredible toll that it has taken on families throughout the country, we have decided to expand our subcommittee and include National Philoptochos Board Members and/or representatives from all of our nine metropolises. As of this writing, our current National Philoptochos committee members are listed above by metropolis.

To make their job more manageable, the members are working in teams with fellow subcommittee members from their metropolis and focusing on researching and identifying what's happening in their metropolis in terms of initiatives, in all of the regions and states covered by their metropolis, to address the opioid crisis. Our main objective is to help foster a continual open dialogue between our clergy and the families to whom they minister. In order to note their findings on each initiative that they identify and explain its purpose in a consistent manner, we have developed a template for members to use. After we have completed our data collection process, it is our hope to share information on these initiatives on our website sorted by metropolis, whether developed by a church, Philoptochos chapter or ministry, so we can learn from each other and implement similarly effective initiatives in other metropolises or parts of the country.

Addressing the American Opioid Epidemic (continued)

Once we have finished our research on these initiatives, and we are beyond the challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic, then as a team we will resume researching and/or attending Conferences/Conventions/Meetings/Symposiums to better understand the magnitude of this devastating scourge, to network with Task Forces of qualified professionals in healthcare, mental health, law enforcement, community and government leaders, and to try to vet Treatment Centers as resources.

As Chair of the Opioid Crisis Subcommittee, in addition to assisting our members and guiding our work, I will focus my efforts on refining the following General Topics that affect all of us.

1. Introduction
2. Mission and Objectives
3. Target Audience
4. Articles
5. Books
6. Television Programs and Movies
7. Agencies
8. Prevention
9. Reducing the Stigma
10. Care and Treatment

Although we continue to add to our Book List, here are six books that we have been reading for greater insight into the opioid epidemic.

1. S.O.B.E.R. – A Story of Addiction Told by a Mother and Her Son, By Anita Baglaneas Devlin and Michael Develin Jr., 2014
2. The Recovery Book: Answers to All Your Questions About Addiction and Alcoholism and Finding Health and Happiness in Sobriety, Authored by Al J. Mooney, MD, Catherine Dold, and Howard Eisenberg, Forward by Harry Haroutunian, MD (Physician Director, Betty Ford Center), 2014
3. Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey Through His Son's Addiction, By David Sheff, 2008
4. Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company that Addicted America, By Beth Macy, 2018
5. Long Way Home, By Cameron Douglas, 2019
6. Pain Killer – An Empire of Deceit and the Origin of America's Opioid Epidemic, by Barry Meier, 2003, 2018 (Expanded and Updated Edition)

My sister Kathy attended the Orthodox Christian Association of Medicine, Psychology, and Religion (OCAMPR) Annual Conference, entitled "Isolation. Violence. Hope and Communion.", from Thursday, November 7, 2019 through Saturday, November 9, 2019 at Saints Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church in Glenview, Illinois, during which Addiction and Treatment (as well as human trafficking) were covered among other current topics. Through presentations given, the collateral materials provided, and contacts we have made, we continue to gain a deeper understanding into the opioid crisis from these and other medical, psychological and theological perspectives which we plan to share and convey as part of our educational initiative.

Addressing the American Opioid Epidemic (continued)

For greater insight into the opioid crisis, on Father's Day, Sunday, June 21, 2020, the renowned CBS news program, 60 Minutes, with correspondent Bill Whitaker and producer Sam Hornblower, featured "The opioid epidemic: Who is to blame?" In this informative documentary, we learned about "The Opioid Playbook" and "The connections between drug companies and the opioid epidemic". It is definitely an episode to watch.

We look forward to our Virtual National Philoptochos Convention 2020 on Friday, August 21, 2020 and Saturday, August 22, 2020 during which our delegates will hear what promises to be an engaging live presentation by our guest speaker on "Breaking down the stigma of addiction and what we can do to make a difference through prevention education", which will be followed by a question and answer session. You do not want to miss it!

Our goal is to unveil the community educational initiative addressing the opioid crisis on the Philoptochos website in August 2020 and update the valuable resources on an ongoing basis for the benefit of our Greek Orthodox community.