

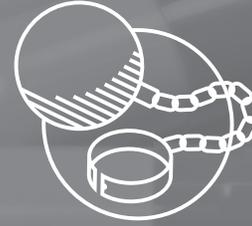


# Substance Abuse Prevention Sunday

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“Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won’t be tempted. Carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

*Galatians 6:1-2, CSB*



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# The Opioid Crisis

by ERLC Policy Staff

The opioid epidemic affects families, churches, and communities from all walks of life. Opioids alone account for two-thirds of all drug related deaths. On average, 115 people die every day from opioid overdoses. Given the median church size in America is 75 people, we're losing roughly the equivalent of one-and-a-half churches every day to death from opioid use. Like many Americans, pastors and members of local Southern Baptist churches witness the fall out of the opioid epidemic and desire to help.

**Southern Baptists believe all people are created in the image of God and therefore maintain dignity in the midst of addiction.** Those addicted deserve our respect and compassion, along with the devotion of our churches and community resources to provide solutions that best serve each individual. This work is important not just for those currently addicted, but also for preserving human dignity for future generations.

**Combating the opioid crisis is consistent with a pro-life ethic.** Southern Baptists believe a pro-life view of human dignity extends beyond the womb to all areas of life, families, and communities. Drug addiction wrecks human flourishing by tearing apart families and increasing unemployment. The opioid epidemic is already straining foster care and adoptions systems across the country. The ERLC supports policies that make foster participation easier for willing and qualified families.

**Southern Baptists call for awareness and advocacy among the public, and reform among medical communities.** Use of opioids should only be as directed by a licensed medical professional. Even then, doctors, pharmacists, drug companies, and insurance providers should only administer opioids when absolutely necessary. The medical community itself must reform to reduce the number opioids in circulation.

**ERLC supports policy initiatives that engage churches and other local organizations.** Successful confrontation of the opioid epidemic requires cooperation among both government authorities and local civil society organizations. The ERLC supports government policies, including potential grant opportunities, that recognize faith-based organizations as collaborators toward opioid addiction prevention and recovery.

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