



Hancock County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services  
Hancock County Community Partnership  
438 Carnahan Avenue • Findlay, Ohio 45840  
419-424-1985 • Fax: 419-424-2037

Dear Community Leader,

In 2013, with a determination to address the opiate epidemic, a group of citizens, along with the Hancock County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services, designed and adopted the *Preamble for Care in Hancock County*. The purpose of this document is to align healthcare with the principles of recovery.

However, following the establishment of the Preamble, Hancock County was greatly impacted by an explosion of opiate and heroin use, overdose, and death. In 2015, this epidemic killed a record 3,050 Ohioans. Hancock County lost 16 individuals to opiate and heroin overdose death.

To expand the purpose of the Preamble, this group of community members met again in 2016 to establish a unified message that empowers individuals, strengthens local efforts that address this epidemic, and increases community determination. This message is informed by the best science and practice available.

The following document, "*A Community Position on the Value of Life in Hancock County*" is the result of this collaborative work.

We ask any organization that chooses to address the opiate epidemic in our community to share messages that are consistent with those outlined in this document. We believe that the more consistent our message is about this issue, the greater the success we will have ending this public health crisis.

If you have any questions or concerns about this document, or would like supporting information regarding the statements included in this document, please contact us at 419-424-1985 or [zthomas@yourpathtohealth.org](mailto:zthomas@yourpathtohealth.org).

If you know someone who needs help, please call 2-1-1 for information about local treatment and support services.

We sincerely thank you for your commitment to the safety and health of our community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brad Bundy, DO  
Co-Chair  
Hancock County Opiate Task Force

Dr. Debra Parker, Pharm.D.  
Co-Chair  
Hancock County Opiate Task Force

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*The Hancock County ADAMHS Board and Community Partnership will not discriminate against anyone because of race, color, religion, sex, creed, age, ancestry, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, military status, or genetic information.*



## A Community Position on the Value of Life in Hancock County

"All have their worth and each contributes to the worth of others." – J.R.R. Tolkien

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Our community has suffered the casualties of a national public health crisis created by harmful substance use and addiction.

This crisis can affect anyone at anytime.

However, when we come together to face this crisis, we are empowered with a common knowledge that leads us to create a safe, healthy, and thriving community.

As a community, we embrace these truths:

1. No person is expendable.
2. Addiction is a chronic disease of the brain.
3. Each member of our family serves as the best hope for ending this crisis.
4. Prevention and treatment work, and recovery is real.

When we speak this common language, we break down barriers and allow our community to heal.

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**No person is expendable.** All people deserve to be valued, respected, and treated with dignity. *Despite a person's challenges or life choices, we charge ourselves with the purpose of ensuring that everyone in our community is provided with the best opportunity to live a safe, healthy, and productive life.*

**Addiction is a chronic disease of the brain.** Harmful substance use can lead to a substance use disorder. Addiction is a substance use disorder in which the brain has been changed in such a way that a person no longer has the ability to make healthy choices. Addiction alters the structure of the brain and results in the brain not being able to function like a healthy brain. Just like any other unhealthy organ of the body, appropriate treatment and continuous support must be provided to help the organ function properly. *We charge ourselves with the purpose of ensuring that appropriate addiction treatment and recovery support services are available to everyone in our community.*

**Each member of our family serves as the best hope for ending this crisis.** A person with a substance use disorder is often shamed and blamed for their disease. As a result, they may live in isolation and lack important relationships with others. Strong, healthy, and supported relationships are key in helping a person with a substance use disorder get treatment and sustain recovery. *We charge ourselves with providing appropriate support for families who have a loved one with a substance use disorder.*

**Prevention and treatment work, and recovery is real.** There is much evidence to support the effectiveness of harmful substance use prevention and a person with a substance use disorder can sustain long-term recovery. Substance use disorders can be prevented when communities provide opportunities that promote and encourage healthy behaviors. For a person with a substance use disorder, these opportunities help to sustain recovery. *We charge ourselves with expanding, supporting, and promoting opportunities that lead to a safer, healthier, and thriving community.*

Adopted: February 21, 2017

A Community Position on the Value of Life in Hancock County  
*Messaging Support Document*

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## LANGUAGE MATTERS

Language is powerful – especially when talking about addictions.

Stigmatizing language perpetuates negative perceptions.

“Person first” language focuses on the person, not the disorder.

### *When Discussing Addictions...*

SAY THIS...	...INSTEAD OF THIS
Person with a substance use disorder	Addict, junkie, druggie
Person living in recovery	Ex-addict
Person living with an addiction	Battling/suffering from an addiction
Person arrested for drug violation	Drug offender
Chooses not to at this point	Non-compliant/bombed out
Medication is a treatment tool	Medication is a crutch
Had a setback	Relapsed
Maintained recovery	Stayed clean
Positive drug screen	Dirty drug screen

### How to Support Someone in Recovery from Addiction

- **Don't judge.** Many people in recovery feel judged by their family and friends. Accept them for who they are and refrain from criticism and negativity.
- **Be patient.** Recovery can be a long, complicated process. People often have setbacks. It's important for them to know that you support them when things get tough.
- **Reinforce that recovery is possible.** Like other chronic diseases, people can manage addictions successfully.
- **Actively listen.** Take notice of your loved one's victories and struggles.
- **Encourage healthy habits.** Cooking, exercising and playing games are all positive, substance-free activities you can do with a person in recovery.
- **Suggest a support group.** Support groups allow people in recovery to interact with and receive encouragement from others who struggle with addiction.
- **Continue to offer encouragement and support.** Emphasize that it takes a lot of courage to get help for an addiction.
- **Take care of yourself.** Take time to participate in activities you enjoy. Spend time with others, or consider joining a support group for friends and families of people with addictions.

### Tips for Talking with a Loved One About Substance Use

- **Talk** with them in a quiet, private place when both of you are sober and calm.
- **Try to understand** the person's own perception of their substance use. Ask if they believe their substance use is a problem.
- **Consider** the person's readiness to talk about their substance use.
- **Do not force** the person to admit they have a problem.
- **Express** your point of view by using “I” statements, like “I have noticed...” or “I am concerned...”
- **Identify and discuss** their behavior rather than criticize their character.
- **Let the person know** that you are concerned and willing to help.
- **Listen** without judging the person as bad or immoral.
- **Do not label or accuse** the person of being an “addict.”
- **Treat the person with respect and dignity.**
- **Have realistic expectations for the person** – learning to manage a brain disease takes time.

Messaging Support Document content provided by:

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*Stronger Together.*