



## 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.*

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