

February 16, 2018

Dear Faith Leaders and Community Members,

Substance use and opioid abuse have reached epidemic proportions in the Tampa Bay area and across our state and nation. Homeless shelters are at capacity, hospitals emergency departments and law enforcement agencies are citing the current opioid epidemic as a critical challenge in many communities. Countless families and children are suffering the consequences, not sure where to turn for help and often left without hope.

However, hope is not found in government, corporate or academic solutions alone and we realize the faith community plays a critical role in prevention, intervention and support with this epidemic. That is why we have come together under the Humana Bold Goals initiative to plan a series of workshops in the summer of 2018 with faith leaders in Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties to explore new opportunities for solutions, alliances, and education in combatting the current opioid crisis and broader recovery journeys.

We are writing this letter to invite you to be part of this initiative. You likely know someone wrestling with an addiction or in the midst of a recovery. As this crisis mounts, more will come forward, looking for your guidance with personal struggles or challenges with a loved one. Do you know how to respond?

Some of our goals with these workshops will be to:

- Inform faith leaders of the magnitude of the opioid epidemic;
- Share how to recognize signs of addiction among those within their circles of influence;
- Provide tips and tools for helping faith leaders advise and counsel those affected by opioid abuse;
- Expose you to valuable resources within your community to assist you and your congregations;
- Make you more effective in supporting children and families through prevention and recovery; and
- Will work on building a platform to provide training, education, connectivity for faith leaders.

Monthly meetings are being held to plan for these upcoming workshops. We also plan to hold a Mental Health First Aid Workshop at no charge for all faith leaders who wish to attend.

Separate planning teams have started for Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties, with Dr. Joe Bohn from the University of South Florida serving as the planning committee chair. We welcome and need your engagement to make these events a success. Should you have any questions feel free to contact Dr. Bohn at [Jbohn2@health.usf.edu](mailto:Jbohn2@health.usf.edu) or 502-645-5776.

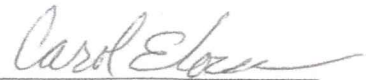
Respectfully,



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