

## **PROCEDURES**

### **CARING FOR CHEMICALLY-DEPENDENT CHURCH PROFESSIONALS**

The Bishop will offer opportunities for healing to those who are afflicted by chemical, alcohol and other addictions. This shall be done through:

- A. Intervention
- B. Guidance/Treatment
- C. Preventive Education

#### **A. Intervention**

1. Consultants, knowledgeable in the field of chemical dependency will be identified to assist the Bishop in dealing with issues arising from chemically-dependent persons employed by the Synod or one of its congregations.
2. The chemically-dependent professional leader is encouraged to seek assistance, with assurance that support and guidance in seeking treatment will be offered.
3. If there is denial of such dependency, the bishop or congregational council in consultation with the Bishop can require assessment by a certified agency.
4. Once chemical dependency is recognized, there will be firm and compassionate confrontation regarding the reality of the person's situation. It is critical that this person's support community be involved, and possibly an addictions professional who may assist with facilitation of this meeting.

#### **B. Guidance/Treatment**

1. After the meeting of intervention, the Bishop or appointee shall oversee the provision of spiritual care for the chemically-dependent professional and his/her family.
2. The Bishop or appointee shall engage a certified agency to prepare a confidential assessment and suggest a treatment plan.
3. Implementation of the treatment plan shall be endorsed by the chemically-dependent person, spouse and/or family, congregation/employing agency, bishop and/or other appropriate persons involved.
4. Ministry to the family or those close to the chemically-dependent person, spouse and/or family shall include assistance in seeking treatment through support groups or individual therapy.
5. When an interruption in service to a congregation or employing agency occurs, a ministry of reconciliation and interpretation shall be provided by the Bishop in that setting.

6. The congregation or employing agency shall be encouraged to maintain the status of the professional leader while treatment is being pursued.
7. If the treatment requires extended absence from service, compensation shall be provided in accordance with the long term disability plan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.
8. As chemical dependency is a disease that may be arrested but not cured, on-going treatment must be pursued.
  - a) The Bishop or appointee shall be in regular contact with the professional leader and the congregation or employing agency regarding the professional leader's ability to function effectively in ministry.
  - b) The person who denies the care and help offered in this guideline and whose job performance becomes unacceptable shall be held in jeopardy of the policy regulating job protection/re-employment (Part III, Section 5 of the Bylaws, Synod of Alberta and the Territories).
  - c) Prior to future calls/appointments the bishop shall, with the concurrence of the chemically-dependent professional leader, ensure the disclosure of the relevant history and present circumstances of the professional leader and agree with all parties to a plan for intervention should the problem recur.

#### C. Preventive Education

1. Educational programs shall be developed to inform clergy and laity alike regarding chemical dependency. Collaboration with professional resources will provide much of the expertise.
2. A resource packet of information and assistance shall be made available from the Synod office and handled with discretion and confidentiality.
3. Congregations shall be encouraged to dialogue with Alcoholics Anonymous and other existing twelve-step groups, as well as other support agencies and related organizations.
4. Advocacy for more effective government legislation in areas such as impaired driving, use of Liquor Tax Revenue and alcohol advertising, will be promoted.