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From The Executive Director by Kevin Rich

As we enter the holiday season 2025, on behalf of myself and the Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) Board of Directors would like to wish everyone a very happy holiday. It seems like we just celebrated the new year 2025, and now the year is coming to an end. I wish everyone a safe and prosperous new year 2026. As we enter the busy cough, cold and flu season, remember to take time and care for yourself both mentally and physically. If you are or know a pharmacist, student pharmacist, or pharmacy technician suffering from substance use disorder (SUD) or mental health issue alone or co-occurring with SUD, call OPHP for assistance now, since left alone the problem will not go away

and will get progressively worse. I challenge everyone especially during this busy holiday season to be aware there are some that struggle during this time of the year either due to loneliness or mental health issues and I hope you are willing to reach out and offer support during this difficult time for those struggling and make a difference. If you are missing a loved one or someone close to you, please know that Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) extends our heartfelt condolences.

Enterhealth a Dallas based treatment center has contributed an article in this issue **“Holiday Season Information and Tips for Families From OPHP”** The holiday season for some can be very stressful and put one’s personal recovery at risk. This article gives some simple tips for those recovering from substance use disorders. I hope you enjoy the article.

Enterhealth contributed another article for this issue **“How Faith Can Help with Alcohol and Drug Addiction”**.

I assure you it is the best thing you could do for a family member, friend, colleague or yourself. If there is no legal action, the pharmacist or student pharmacist can get the help and treatment they need for their disease and remain anonymous to the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy as long as they comply with the recovery recommendations of OPHP.

If you haven't already contributed to OPHP this year, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution. These contributions help OPHP continue to assist pharmacists/pharmacy students with the recovery process. To donate, please use the form below or ophp.us/donate. For those who have contributed this year, please accept our sincere thanks.

How Faith Can Help with Alcohol and Drug Addiction". Personal recovery from a substance use disorder requires spirituality. This article highlights the distinction between religion and spirituality for those that struggle with religion, breaking down the barrier for those who have certain trauma associated with religion or are agnostic or atheist. I hope you enjoy this article.

When a pharmacist, student pharmacist or pharmacy technician enters the OPHP program, and begins their road to personal recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD) and/or co-occurring issue often the family, friends or colleagues may not understand the vital role they may play in the OPHP participant's recovery. They may even verbalize that they knew something was wrong but couldn't identify it and were shocked to find that their loved one, friend or colleague suffered from a SUD or co-occurring issue. In this issue OPHP will include an article **"Identifying the Problem"** in hopes to help loved ones identify the issues in those suffering and what they can do to support their loved ones. Also, it is important for friends, family members or colleagues to get assistance since they also are impacted by this insidious disease.

OPHP has a free-standing website at www.ophp.us Please visit our website to learn more about the services OPHP provides the pharmacy profession regarding assistance with a personal substance use disorder and/or mental health issues. Contact OPHP if you have any questions or need assistance.

Don't forget, take time for self-care, and if you are struggling with SUD or other mental health issues, or you know another pharmacist or student pharmacist who you think maybe suffering call the (OPHP) Helpline immediately. There are those who struggle or have a hard time dealing with life on life's terms daily. Can I challenge everyone to recognize these struggles either in themselves or others and reach out for help or be willing to help if needed? If you find yourself struggling don't hesitate to reach out to (OPHP) for help that is readily available if needed. If you know someone struggling during this time, I hope you will be willing to be available for them if needed. If you are a pharmacist or student pharmacist and you are struggling personally with the substance use disorder or other mental health issues, I would encourage you to call OPHP today and self-report your issues now. The advantages of self-reporting your own issues of substance use disorder or mental health issues are that you can get well or get in recovery, and if there are no legal issues or complaint the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy does not get involved. This is a tremendous opportunity, so don't let it slip away if you are suffering from substance use disorder or other mental health issues call OPHP before it is too late, resulting in disciplinary action on your intern/pharmacy license or other legal consequences.

I encourage any pharmacist or student pharmacist that may be struggling with substance use disorder or any other mental health issue, or if you know a pharmacist or student pharmacist you think may be struggling, to call the OPHP Help Line now.

All calls are confidential and OPHP is readily available for help.

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Please enjoy the newsletter.

At Enterhealth, many of the patients we treat come into our program with underlying mental illnesses, spiritual dilemmas and personal problems that need to be addressed during their treatment for alcohol or drug addiction. As many as 80% of people who come to Enterhealth for treatment come in with some kind of co-occurring issue, and to effectively help these people, we need to address both the addiction and the additional problems. We call this **dual-diagnosis treatment**, and it's a big part of what we do.

To be clear, when Enterhealth refers to dual-diagnosis treatment, we mean co-occurring psychological/mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder or psychosis. We also believe that addiction is a brain disease, which is supported by research from the National Institutes of Health and the American Society for Addiction Medicine. We do not subscribe to the belief that addiction is the result of a moral or spiritual failing.

That being said, we recognize that those struggling with addiction who consider themselves religious or spiritual have unique obstacles for recovery. People of faith often grapple with what it means to abuse drugs and alcohol, which is usually at odds with their belief. Many people find strength in their faith and religion, and for patients who feel this way, treatment programs can often be enhanced by adding a spiritual component to their comprehensive treatment plan.

First, it's important to make a quick distinction between religion and spirituality. Many times, these terms are thrown out more or less interchangeably, but there are distinct elements that make them

different. Religion denotes organized systems of belief, and includes different faiths such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and the myriad other world religions.

Most (if not all) people who consider themselves religious believe in a specific higher power specific to their faith (God, Allah, etc.), and many also believe in an afterlife. Religion usually also requires believers to follow specific rules, guidelines, and rituals for worship (i.e., prayer, meditation).

Spirituality, on the other hand, does not denote belief in a specific religion or higher power. The concept of spirituality is much broader, and it tends to involve finding something outside of oneself that allows people to derive meaning and purpose in life. For example, some people feel that they have a spiritual connection to the Earth (or even more broadly, the universe) that connects them to the world and other living things.

The key distinction here is that a person who believes that they have a spiritual connection to the Earth or the universe is not worshipping a specific higher power, and they don't typically have codified practices for worship. Spirituality also tends to be more inclusive and abstract than religion.

Incorporating Spirituality into a Clinical Treatment Program

Most people look at the addiction treatment industry and assume there are two options: clinical treatment programs that take a very medical approach, and spiritual or religious programs/fellowships such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous. In reality, there is usually a good amount of overlap between these two kinds of addiction-recovery models. That's why incorporating spirituality in the clinical treatment process can be highly beneficial for those who consider religion or spirituality to be an important aspect of their lives.

For those in treatment who are open to them, faith-based treatments can be helpful tools for self-realization and introspection. Other spiritual or religious practices, such as prayer and meditation, help patients calm themselves and allow them to realize their innermost thoughts and feelings. Prayer and meditation can also aid in recovery by helping people cope with daily struggles in ways that don't involve alcohol or drugs.

Religious treatment programs tend to focus a great deal on prayer, and this can be helpful for some people. These support groups and treatments often promote prayer as a method to strengthen one's spirit and forge a close relationship with a higher power so that addicts feel healthy and loved enough to turn away from alcohol and drugs and turn to prayer and a higher power.

How Enterhealth Incorporates Spirituality into Addiction Treatment

At Enterhealth, we know that overcoming alcohol and drug addiction is not a one-size-fits-all process. It takes time, effort, and the right treatment to be effective for all patients. That's why our team of addiction-trained physicians, psychiatrists and other specialists collaborate to create customized treatment plans for all of our patients.

While Enterhealth maintains a strong focus on science-based medical treatment, we do recognize that faith and spiritual practices can be beneficial to patients and their family members. Faith-based components of a comprehensive plan can impart strength and hope, as well as giving the person in treatment healthy coping mechanisms to deal with stress, cravings and other difficulties associated with addiction.

As such, Enterhealth does offer patients the option to work the 12-steps at our inpatient facility, Enterhealth Ranch. The 12-step method was originally developed by co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. In summary, the 12-step method involves admission that the alcoholic or addict has no control over their addiction, that they must turn themselves over to their higher power for strength, and that they need to live by a new code of behavior. The 12-step program at Enterhealth Ranch is typically led by a representative from Alcoholics Anonymous and meets at regular times several days a week.

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Portia Nelson's poem "There's a Hole in My Sidewalk" explores the journey of self-awareness and personal growth through the metaphor of falling into a hole in the sidewalk.

The Poem

The poem, structured in five chapters, illustrates the stages of recognizing and dealing with personal challenges. Here's a brief overview of its content:

1. **Chapter I:** The speaker walks down the street and falls into a deep hole, feeling lost and helpless. They believe it isn't their fault and take a long time to find a way out.
2. **Chapter II:** The speaker encounters the same hole again but pretends not to see it, falling in once more. They still feel it isn't their fault and struggle to escape.
3. **Chapter III:** The speaker acknowledges the hole's presence and recognizes their responsibility for falling in, but they manage to get out quickly.
4. **Chapter IV:** The speaker learns to walk around the hole, indicating growth and awareness of their patterns.
5. **Chapter V:** Finally, the speaker chooses to walk down a different street altogether, symbolizing a significant change in behavior and perspective.

Themes and Significance

The poem is a powerful reflection on human behavior, habits, and the process of change. It emphasizes that:

- **Awareness:** Recognizing our patterns is the first step toward change.
- **Responsibility:** Understanding that while we may fall into old habits, we can take responsibility for our actions.
- **Growth:** The journey from falling into the hole to walking around it represents personal growth and the ability to make different choices in life. Portia Nelson's work resonates with many as it captures the universal experience of facing and overcoming personal challenges, making it a popular piece in therapeutic and reflective contexts.

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