

# **National Black Church Initiative**

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**For Immediate Release**

## **The National Black Church Initiative Authorizes 15,000 Black Churches In Response To The National Emergency On Opioid Overdosing And Calls To Create A National Faith-Based Opioid Task Force**

*The Black Church swings into action*

**Washington, DC** – The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a faith-based coalition of 34,000 churches comprised of 15 denominations and 15.7 million African Americans, has answered the call from our nation by making available 15,000 Black Churches to assist in the opioid crisis and has created a national task force of inner-faith religious leaders to serve as an advisory board to the federal government, state governments, foundations and organizations like the National Governors Association, and the United States Conference of Mayors. Rev. Anthony Evans, President of the National Black Church Initiative, has sent an emergency letter to the Governors Association and the Conference of Mayors to offer the Black Church's assistance in this national crisis.

NBCI recognizes that the opioid crisis requires a rapid and comprehensive response. We clearly understand that this crisis does not only affect the individual but also the entire family, their

community, and first responders. This is why we are taking a proactive stance to authorize 15,000 of our Churches in organizing their ministries to assist several state, local and county officials in the areas of, but not limited to: emergency shelters, housing, food, clothing, peer to peer counseling, and volunteers. We have learned from the crack epidemic in the 80s that the Church needs a more proactive strategy to combat and contain this emerging crisis. This is why, over the past month, we have reached out to major inner-faith leaders across regions and denominations to form a faith-based task force to assist the National Commission on Opioid Abuse, Governors, Mayors, and local health officials.

It is the proper role of the Church to be able to respond in this manner and to bring some healing to those communities in crisis.

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of the National Black Church Initiative, says, “For the past 8 months we have been working with a number of states—Florida, Virginia, Minnesota, and New York—offering them a comprehensive science based, data driven, clinical approach to help slow the crisis down so that we can approach this as a nation and as a community in a logical, substantive response. The Church urges all states to work very closely with all faith communities. Today I am happy to report that over 7,000 African American Churches have opioid ministries in the states listed above. We will increase the Church participation at 50% over the next 6 months, bringing our total to over 15,000 Churches out of our 34,000 Church network engaged in helping states, governors and communities deal with this growing and unabated crisis.”

Just today Rev. Evans authorized his staff to focus on the state of Maryland which has the dubious title of being the number one state in the nation with the most opioid related deaths. It just was reported that in 2017 the State of Maryland deaths have increased by 36% when compared with this time last year. NBCI clinical experts, staff and volunteers will be reaching out to Governor Hogan and the entire State of Maryland to offer their assistance on how to begin to decrease these numbers and put in place a sensible, scientific based, clinical response. The National Black Church Initiative has come up with an innovative response that they are sharing with the states listed above and any other states that need its help. We know that this will be a long fight but we will win it in the Name of God.

### **ABOUT NBCI**

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI) is a coalition of 34,000 African American and Latino Churches working to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare, technology, education, housing, and the environment. NBCI’s mission is to provide critical wellness information to all of its members, congregants, Churches and the public. Our methodology is utilizing faith and sound health science.

NBCI’s purpose is to partner with major organizations and officials whose main mission is to reduce racial disparities in the variety of areas cited above. NBCI offers faith-based, out-of-the-box and cutting edge solutions to stubborn economic and social issues. NBCI’s programs are

governed by credible statistical analysis, science based strategies and techniques, and methods that work. Visit our website at [www.naltBlackChurch.com](http://www.naltBlackChurch.com).