



Belmont Abbey
COLLEGE
*That in all things God
may be glorified*

For Immediate Release

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Belmont Abbey College Hosts Opioid Forum to Educate Students on Opioid Epidemic

Belmont, N.C. (January 9, 2024) – Belmont Abbey College is hosting an Opioid Forum open to the local community in order to take a proactive approach in addressing the national and international opioid epidemic. The forum aims to educate college and high school students in health-related fields on how to identify issues and procedures of care surrounding opioids and fentanyl. Belmont Abbey College hopes to encourage and empower students and to continue educating college and high school students about opioid issues through peer-to-peer learning.

Sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Gaston County District 7680, this event will provide valuable insights from experts in the field. The Opioid Forum will feature a lineup of distinguished speakers who will cover various topics related to the opioid crisis. Michelle Mathis, Chair of the Gaston Controlled Substance and Director of Olive Branch Ministries, will provide an overview of the epidemic, shedding light on its magnitude and impact. Delton Russel, a Recovery Specialist from Partners Health Management, will focus on mental health issues associated with opioid addiction. Maceo Mayo, representing RHA Health Services, will discuss substance use prevention strategies. Additionally, Belmont Abbey College's Chief of Police, Andy Leonard, and Chair of Human Services & Sociology and Associate Psychology Professor, Dr. Diana M. Elliot, will also serve as speakers at the forum. The Master of Ceremonies for the event will be Judge Jesse Caldwell, Sr., from the Gaston County judiciary.

Belmont Abbey College is committed to providing its nursing and healthcare students with a well-rounded education that exposes them to a variety of specialties and trending issues in healthcare. The college's nursing program emphasizes the importance of caring for individuals, families, and communities while also instilling the Benedictine Hallmarks of compassion and appreciation for life. The ongoing opioid crisis has sparked numerous discussions among students, particularly in courses such as Psych/Mental Health and Community and Population Health, as well as their clinical components. These discussions aim to equip future nurses and healthcare workers with the necessary skills to assess, recognize, identify, and implement care plans, often involving referrals for specialized addiction treatment.

Dr. Lee-Ann Kenny, Interim Chair and Director of Nursing at Belmont Abbey College, stated, "This forum provides an invaluable opportunity for students to learn about the complexities of the opioid crisis and how it impacts individuals and communities. By equipping our students with the knowledge and skills to address this crisis, we are preparing them to make a real difference in the lives of those affected."

The Opioid Forum at Belmont Abbey College serves as a platform for students, faculty, and the local community to come together and address the pressing issues surrounding the opioid epidemic. By fostering dialogue and sharing knowledge, the college is playing an active role in combating this crisis. The event will not only enhance the education of students in health-related fields but also contribute to the overall well-being of the community. The Forum will take place on January 25th at 7 p.m. in the Haid and will be available via live stream at www.bac.edu/live.

About Belmont Abbey College: Founded in 1876, Belmont Abbey College is a private, Catholic baccalaureate and liberal arts institution. Our mission is to educate students in the liberal arts and sciences so that in all things God may be glorified. Guided by the Catholic intellectual tradition and the Benedictine spirit of prayer and learning, we welcome a diverse body of students and provide them with an education that will enable them to lead lives of integrity, to succeed professionally, to become responsible citizens, and to be a blessing to themselves and to others. Our beautiful and historic campus is conveniently located just 10 miles west of Charlotte, N.C., and is currently home to more than 1500 students. For more information, visit <https://belmontabbeycollege.edu/>.