

**[OVT-007] On Establishing a Grant to Develop Resources to Educate Entities Regarding Serious Mental Illness Issues—From the Presbytery of Mission.**

**Source:** Presbytery  
**Committee:** Unassigned

**Event:** 223rd General Assembly (2018)  
**Sponsor:** Mission Presbytery  
**Type:** General Assembly Full Consideration

## Recommendation

The Presbytery of Mission overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) to:

1. Recognize the 10th anniversary of the “Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness”<sup>1</sup> approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to acknowledge the relevancy it still holds for our church and society in 2018.
2. Establish a \$250,000 grant to be used to implement the provisions of this overture. The funds will be used to develop plans of action and resources that will be used by presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries of the PC(USA) to further educate these entities within PC(USA) regarding serious mental illness issues with the intent to provide a foundation for action within the denomination.
3. While it is acknowledged that all of the recommendations within the “Comfort My People”<sup>2</sup> statement are worthy of implementation, this overture focuses on those action items that are foundational to any development of long-term policies and plans for action within the PC(USA). Grants to be awarded will therefore focus on the following recommendations:
  - a. Presbyteries: Recommendations 6.a.–d., g, 10. (pp. 8, 10).
  - b. Congregations: Recommendations 9.a., d.–k., o., q., t. (pp. 9, 10).
  - c. Seminaries: Recommendations 14.a.–e. (p. 11).
4. Conduct a review and evaluation of the actions that have been taken since the policy statement was approved, with a report to be presented at the 224th General Assembly (2020).
  - a. Survey of presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries to evaluate how these organizations have responded to the policy statement’s recommendations.
  - b. Based on survey results, recommend specific activities designed to focus and implement measures to enhance mental health initiatives in presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries.
5. Review, update, and present a second edition of “Comfort My People” for approval at the 224th General Assembly (2020). This review and update would examine terminology, facts, findings, hyperlinks, and add any additional resources (i.e. websites, books, movies) published since 2008 that would add value to the statement.

## Rationale

The “Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness,” approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), was a profound statement of faith for persons, families, and communities living with mental illness. This statement has aided in the message of hope through educating Christians and reducing the stigma associated with mental illness.

In recognition of its tenth anniversary, it is our desire to see this statement reimagined and instituted as a priority within our denomination and put into practice in our presbyteries, congregations, and seminaries. Our hope is to see this document serve as an instrument for God’s love in the lives of those who still feel as if they are living in the “The Land of Exile” within their own communities.

Accepting that our denomination has allocated limited resources to ensure these recommendations are effectively implemented, we believe that by allocating funds that will be available to these entities as grants, there would be a grassroots effort that would ensure “God’s Call to Comfort” is honored.

Finally, we strongly believe God is still calling the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to be a prophetic voice within our contexts to comfort God’s people. This overture will demonstrate our denomination’s commitment to serve those who live with mental illness and their families/communities in the process of healing and wholeness.

#### Endnotes

1. <https://www.pcusa.org/resource/comfort-my-people-policy-statement-serious-mental>
2. “Comfort My People: A Policy Statement on Serious Mental Illness” approved at the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), pp. 8–12.

## Concurrence

**Chicago**

**Grand Canyon**

**New Covenant**

**Santa Fe**

**Southeastern Illinois**

**Tres Rios**

**Wabash Valley**

**West Jersey**

**de Cristo**

## Additional Resources

Language - Korean

007\_Mental\_Issues-MissionKorean.pdf