2007 Annual Report
The Diocese of Worcester
Office for Healing and Prevention

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops had been addressing the issue of the sexual assault of children and young people by priests, deacons and other Catholic Church personnel since 1992. In response to the national crisis emerging in 2002 the USCCB developed and approved the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People on June 14, 2002. On December 8, 2002 the Apostolic See approved the "Essential Norms" and the Charter was promulgated on December 12, 2002. Bishop William Skylstad of Spokane, Washington has decreed that the revised "Essential Norms" will take effect May 15, 2006. "The revisions are few and limited in scope…reflecting more precision in legal terminology." The Diocese of Worcester under Bishop Harrington established a committee to address this issue in June 1994 and in January 1996, Bishop Reilly increased and expanded the role of this committee – The Pastoral Care Committee. In response to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People the Diocese of Worcester published its Policy on the Sex Abuse of Minors on May 30, 2002. This office under the direction of Patricia Engdahl, Esq., developed and implemented the policies required by the Charter in accordance with the Charter and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Other extensive work was done in parishes with those who were suffering as a result of these current disclosures.

As of September 2006 the Victim Assistance Coordinator has assumed the following responsibilities:

- Offered services to 31 victims/survivors or family members both in state and out of state. The services included eighteen meetings either at the Chancery or at locations requested by clients and maintained on going communication from them as clinically appropriate. Seven new complainants contacted the office either though letter, email, telephone or attorney.
- Coordinated and attended initial meeting with clients accompanied by an Initial Review Committee member on seven occasions.
- Supervised treatment services for fifteen clients through phone calls, meetings with treatment providers and correspondence with them relative to treatment progress reports and financial issues. This Office has approved financial reimbursement to providers of $27,235.58 during this time period.
- Offered clinical support to clients and family members and other Diocesan personnel either directly or through telephone consultations when indicated.
- Coordinated additional services to clients regarding issues of transportation, medical needs, food, shelter, tuition and this includes financial assistance in addition to above.
- Attended five meetings during this time period with Bishop McManus and clients and their families or therapists who had accepted his offer of these meetings.
- Prepared and presented at six Diocesan Review Board meetings.
- Met with Presbyteral Council, parishioners from various parishes and responded to many phone calls regarding issues related to the Office for Healing and Prevention.
- Assisted Monsignor Sullivan and Sr. Paula Kelleher in completing the material for the 2007 Audit by attending staff meetings, initiating and responding to emails and phone calls. The USCCB is requiring annual audits of every United States Dioceses relative to their compliance with the requirements of the Charter. The Diocese completed audits in 2004 and 2005 and has been found in compliance in those audits. The 2007 audit when completed included all required and appropriate materials from July 2005 until June 30, 2007.
- In 2002 developed the New England Victim Assistance Coordinators Association comprised of coordinators form every New England Diocese and the Eparchy of St. Maron, and other diocesan personnel that Bishops may choose to send. The Association meets quarterly if possible and approximately 20-25 people attend.

Barbara Thorp, Director of the Office of Pastoral Support and Outreach for the Archdiocese of Boston discussed with the group "Issues related to Spirituality Survivors and the Church" on September 21,2006. On January 4, 2007 Sheila Kelly, Deputy Director for the USCCB Office for the Protection of Children and Young People in Washington DC met with the group. Bishop Richard Malone of the Diocese of Portland, Maine, the Region I representative to the USCCB's Committee for the Protection of God's Children and a member of the AD Hoc Committee addressing Safe Environment Programs attended our meeting June 11, 2007. He shared the information he had with us. Bishop McManus supports this endeavor and also attends these meetings.

- Responsible for the implementation and supervision on the Worcester Diocese background check program for all those employed or volunteering for the diocese. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board provides the results of all requests for Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) to the Diocese free of cost. To this point the Diocese has submitted to the CHSB approximately 27,000 CORI applications. In this time period (5/06-6/07) approximately 7000 have been submitted. They also provide approval of diocesan requests for Individual Agreements of Non Disclosure and Statements of Confidential compliance which allow information to be shared with those in authority who have a need for this information. The necessary instructions regarding this process are continually offered to those who attend Safe Environment Trainings. The Victim Assistance Coordinator maintains ongoing contact with the CHSB by phone and fax. CORI application information is submitted to and received from the CHSB electronically. Results are reviewed by the VAC and then entered into Parish Soft and filed. Volunteer Patricia Peloquin has spent many hours preparing and filing these CORI's. When results are returned they are reviewed by the Victim Assistance Coordinator. Those with positive results which may or may not impact and individuals employment or volunteer position with the Diocese will be discussed with pastors, their designees and school principals after their completion of the Individual Agreement of Non-Disclosure. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Human Services provides guidelines as to the gravity of a particular situation. Many school systems as well as other non-profit agencies adhere to these guidelines. Letters regarding CORI Issues may be sent to applicants, pastors and principals. Victim Assistant Coordinator will also meet with applicants, pastors and principles when indicated. Victim Assistant Coordinator is responsible for understanding and implementing all Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws and Criminal History Systems board Regulations, related to accessing, reviewing and appropriately dealing with the results of all CORI's. Application for renewal of certification for access to Criminal Offender Record Information was completed by the Victim Service Coordinator and forward to the Criminal History Board by June 1, 2006. The renewal process occurs every two years. Every individual who either is employed by the Diocese of Worcester or volunteers for the Diocese is required to complete a CORI application. The Diocese has decided at this time CORI's will be resubmitted every five years to the CHSB. Requests for background checks from religious orders and out of state clergy deacons anticipating active service in the Diocese of Worcester are also processed through the office as are many phone calls form diocesan clergy, religious and lay persons.
- Assisted scheduling and presenting at Safe Environment trainings, supervising parish trainings and coordinating documentation. Providing eight trainings-days, evening and Saturdays through out the Diocese concerning Safe Environment, CORI and Code of Ministerial Conduct issues. This includes in parish and cluster settings as well as other venues such as Notre Dame High School in Fitchburg, St. John's High School, Nativity School and Holy Cross College. Phone consultations were also held with the Eparchy of St. Maron regarding CORI and Safe Environment issues.
- Assumed responsibility for the printing and distribution of the Diocesan Code of Conduct. It was reviewed and promulgated on April 7, 2006 as a particular law for the Diocese of Worcester retroactively to October 11, 2005 in accordance with Canons 8§2 and 9 of the Code of Canon Law. This Code has been printed and was distributed to each parish and school during 2006. Each employee and volunteer is asked to review it and sign an agreement that he/she understands his/her responsibilities and diocesan behavior expectations

while he/she is employed or volunteers in the Diocese of Worcester. There are approximately 20,000 to 25,000 employees and volunteers in the Diocese.

- Prepared and monitored the Office for Healing and Prevention budget.
- Attended Conferences and trainings related to enhancing the best practices of the Office for Healing and Prevention:
  - National Victim Assistance Coordinators Conference, Chicago, Illinois
  - USCCB Promise to Protect Conference discussing Child Pornography.
  - College of St. Elizabeth Annual Fall Pastoral Conference
  - Seventh annual Worcester Institute on Loss and Trauma
  - Post Traumatic Stress Training by Cross Country Educational Program
- Participated and presented at community meetings as a representative of the Diocese of Worcester:
  - Worcester Community Health Foundation Comprehensive Child Abuse Prevention/Protection Collaborative
    - Steering Committee
    - Childhood Trauma and Education Committee (monthly meetings and providing trainings to child care staff)
  - Anna Maria College Social Work Advisory Committee (quarterly meetings and guest lecturer on child abuse and neglect)
  - United Way of Central Mass Community Solutions Supporting Positive Youth Development
  - Brain Education Center at the Brudnick New Psychiatric Research Institute

To accomplish these many and varied tasks the Victim Service Coordinator has initiated and or returned approximately 10-12 phone calls daily, initiated or answered approximately 16-20 emails per week and collaborated with the Co-Director on a daily basis. Attended meetings as needed with Monsignor Thomas Sullivan.