

Dr. M.L. Brooks Appointed to Commission on Drug Abuse

Gov. Jim Hunt named 20 North Carolinians to the Commission on Substance Abuse Treatment and Prevention, which will work to streamline the state's substance abuse prevention and treatment policies.

The commission, created by Executive Order in April, includes substance abuse professionals, recovering alcoholics, and other drug addicts, and other interested citizens. The commission will hold public hearings, review North Carolina laws regarding substance abuse, and encourage public and private collaboration in substance abuse programs.

"This commission is made up of people who are committed to helping improve North Carolina's treatment and prevention efforts," Hunt said. "This group will bring its expertise and experience to the table as we work to better focus and coordinate these efforts, and as we combat drug and alcohol abuse."

Hunt has also set up a new Office of Substance Abuse Policy by Executive Order, to support the work of the commission. That office will help establish a unified state policy on substance abuse treatment and prevention, and work to ensure that state and federal funds are used wisely.

This is part of the Governor's ongoing efforts to improve treatment programs in the state. During the special session on crime, Hunt pushed to improve the treatment of drug and alcohol offenders. The General Assembly, enacted the following, which were proposed by Hunt:

*A new drug treatment program for first time offenders which allows them to participate in a rigorous, year long substance abuse and job training program under court supervision instead of serving jail time. Failure to pass a drug test or to complete the program would mean jail time.

*Tripled the funding and adding 270 new Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Treatment (DART) program, which offers an intensive 28 day treatment program for offenders who would otherwise be sent to prison and released almost immediately. Through DART offenders can work to overcome substance abuse problems and reduce recidivism.

*Adding 500 new facility beds for more serious drug offenders, leased from private alcohol and drug treatment centers.

Among those appointed is Dr. Martin L. Brooks of Pembroke, and M.D. at Brooks Medical Clinic.



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The indigenous people of North America respected and honored Mother Earth because she nurtured and provided them with the essentials of life. Their campfire stories, often filled with laughter, taught lessons from the Great Almighty; how he encouraged them to live harmoniously with themselves and others, and how he taught them to treat and respect all things as a living spirit. This was the Way for them.

Yet, the Newcomers to this bountiful country labled the Native Americans—the First ones on the land—as uncivilized, barbarous, and bloodthirsty savages. This point of view overwhelmed the Native Americans, and set the stage for how history would ultimately treat them. Policies and programs, so often translated through BJA directives, many times abolished Native American identities. The First Ones on the Land were demoralized, shamed, and dropped on the doorstep of distinction. In spite of history, some tribes survived while others were not so fortunate.

Today, despite history's backward glance, there is a current effort by Native Americans to retain what they have left of their Traditions, their Culture, their Language, their Land. They have survived!

As my next print—"Bold Spirit"—I have depicted a Native American with one foot firmly planted in the past, and the other pointed westward. In this print, the living spirit of the Ancestral past, and the discipline demanded of one walking the paths of Righteousness and Success portrays the Native American in today's modern society—All dressed up with somewhere to go.

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