

Southern Maryland Intergroup Association

COVID-19 Response Statement

Greetings,

There have been calls, e-mails, and inquiries regarding The Southern Maryland Intergroup Association's (SMIA) response and official position regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic as it relates to our affiliation and service to groups, the Districts in our area, Area 29, and AA as a whole.

The SMIA has no authority, given or implied, to govern individual groups or their members. According to Alcoholics Anonymous 4th Tradition; "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole." Therefore, each group must make their own decisions about when their meetings will reopen, and what practices will be followed to ensure the safety and well-being of their members and attendees. The SMIA can only suggest or recommend that the groups follow the guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and any state or local mandates. Of course this would also depend on the relationship with the facility where the meetings are held. Then it is ultimately up to the group conscience as to how, where, and when meetings will be conducted.

When making these decisions, groups should also consider Alcoholics Anonymous 1st Tradition; "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity." So we should consider the overall effects on AA unity before our own personal desires. Any actions by a group that may have an adverse or damaging affect on unity should be discouraged. Not only unity for that singular group, but AA unity as a whole.

According to the SMIA By-Laws, Section 2.1.4, we must maintain a meeting list. To be effective and useful to those seeking that information, the meeting list should be accurate. With the on-set of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is increasingly more important to keep the meeting lists up-to-date. We have provided on-line forms and a guide on how to use the forms to all District Committee Members (DCM). The guide is also available on the website @ <https://somidintergroup.org/docs/Flyers/SMIA%20Group%20Listing%20Guide.pdf>

We must insist that group additions, changes, reopening's, closures, and permanent closures be submitted by the respective District DCM, the group GSR's, group SMIA Rep, or Program Chair. That individual must provide a telephone number and/or e-mail address so they can be contacted for any questions about that group or meeting. The SMIA does not have the capacity to answer specific questions about groups or meetings beyond the information provided by the aforementioned parties.

The SMIA thanks you for your continued support, and as long as we remain solvent, we will continue to support you with the Bookstall, the Telephone Service, the Lifeline, the Where and When, and the SMIA website.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill L. Leftwich', with a stylized, cursive script.

Bill L. Leftwich

Chairman and Webmaster, SMIA

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