

A word from our Area 24, Panel 69 Delegate, Dan G.

March 18, 2020

Greetings everyone. I have been receiving many emails and phone calls regarding Area 24's stance on closing meetings. Reality is that we don't have a stance. I have spoken to several people regarding the recent order that was issued by the Iowa Governor. This order mandated that no groups of 10 people or more should be gathered. She closed bars down, dine in eating at restaurants, exercise facilities and yes even churches. I have had several individuals ask if they post a notice on the door of the meeting or clubhouse indicating that if you are attending a meeting at this location you are entering at your own risk, does that work. On the surface it looks pretty and maybe the right thing to do but frankly a mandate is a mandate and I personally think we need to abide by that as responsible citizens of our Nation, State, County and community we live in. I have had people say well can they (owners of the buildings ie...churches etc...) make us close down our A.A. meeting. The short answer is yes. We are guests in their building, we pay rent, and they are our landlords. We need to respect their property and their wishes to protect their staff and congregations.

I spoke to a person who stated they contacted GSO (General Service Office) asking them about the Governors mandate and if they needed to follow it relating to their clubhouse. It was relayed to them that absolutely we need to abide by the States law and mandates. **WE ARE NOT ABOVE THE LAW.** If you do meet please follow the guidelines from the CDC on properly sanitizing surfaces, possibly avoid contact such as hugging, shaking hands or holding hands while closing the meeting. Over all be concerned about your personal safety.

This is an unprecedented time in our Country and many other Countries. We don't know what each day will bring. It's sort of like my personal journey in sobriety. I may be having a horrible day today but tomorrow it could very well change. If I choose it to change. I have to have faith that if the meetings I attend all close because of this pandemic we are facing that I will have the strength of my higher power to get me through this time and not take a drink or be nasty to my family, co-workers and friends. We need to all support each other.

WE NEED TO BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION TODAY NOT THE PROBLEM. I truly believe that we need be stewards of good behavior, respect, compassion and guidance. This is when we all truly need to come together and make that phone call to someone in the program whether it is someone new in the program or having been around for a while. This is when we need to use the platforms of technology that have been developed for us to utilize such as skype, FaceTime or zoom and I am sure there are plenty more out there. This is the time when we have to work with the members who may not have that type of technology and call them to simply have a chat and see how they are doing. Plagiarizing from GSO's response to COVID19 letter issued on March 16, 2020

"Those who may have questions regarding A.A. Anonymity Traditions on digital platforms can Review: the Conference-approved pamphlet, Understanding Anonymity and the G.S.O service Material Anonymity Online and Digital Media and the A.A. Guidelines on the internet."

In closing I would like to offer my best wishes for all of you and your families. I am sure everyone is as concerned as I am, simply because of the unknown. Recovering Alcoholics are resilient and are smart, wise and creative and could be described many other ways. I would also like to hear from everyone how they are being creative to reach out to the newcomer, elderly member and others in this time of uncertainty.

With Love and Service, Dan Geels Area 24 Panel 69 Delegate area24.delegate@aa-iowa.org