

2024 Conference Committee on Cooperation with the Professional Community

ITEM E: Consider a request to develop a pamphlet on the unhoused alcoholic in A.A.*

* 2024 EDW distribution

Background Notes:

Excerpt from the October 28, 2023, trustees' Literature Committee meeting report:

The committee considered a *request to develop a pamphlet on A.A. and the Unhoused Person that specifically addresses alcoholism, what A.A. is and is not; and includes personal stories from A.A. members who have experienced homelessness and agreed to forward* to the 74th General Service Conference.

Background:

1. Request to develop pamphlet for the unhoused alcoholic in AA

(1) Submit a clear and concisely worded motion. PAI #43

Consider developing a pamphlet on AA and the Unhoused Person that specifically addresses alcoholism, what AA is and is not; and includes personal stories from AA members who have experienced homelessness.

(2) What problem does this proposed item address?

1. Addresses a growing population with relatively high rates of alcoholism
2. Fills a gap in existing literature
3. Creates an opportunity for AA to begin gathering data and tailor outreach to a community that has perhaps until now been overlooked
4. Reaches out the hand of AA to an underserved remote community
5. Creates a resource for professionals working with this population
6. Allows an unhoused person to see themselves as a member of AA and to know that they're welcome
7. Creates a tool for sponsorship for those working with unhoused individuals
8. Addresses challenges that an individual may encounter with spiritual precepts of the AA program, such as the Seventh Tradition
9. Elucidates accessibility barriers unique to this community that may make regular meeting attendance difficult to sustain
10. Provides guidance to newly-sober unhoused individuals on maintaining their sobriety
11. Creates a space for formerly unhoused AA members to share their experience, strength, and hope

(3) What level of group conscience, if any, discussed the proposed agenda item? Make it clear who is submitting the item (an individual, group, district, area, etc.).

Note: While all items are received equally, experience has shown that ideas greatly benefit from the value of a broader group conscience. Consider if and with whom you would like to have a group conscience discussion on the proposed agenda item prior to submitting.

This agenda item is being proposed by the AA fellowship of Area 40, Montana. It was first proposed by a group who recognized a need in their community within District 41. The group was specifically asked to provide literature for the unhoused to a local shelter and found there was nothing specifically addressing this demographic of people. The group put the idea through to their District and then brought it to a workshop on writing agenda items. The District and the Workshop attendees submitted it for consideration to the Area 40 Fall Assembly. The Area 40 Literature Committee passed the motion within committee and brought it to the floor of Assembly where it passed with substantial unanimity. The motion passed with 64 in favor, 5 opposed, and 6 abstentions.

(4) Provide background information that describes and supports the reasoning for the proposal. List background material(s) included with the proposal:

A member of Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) was approached by the executive director of St. Vincent DePaul in Great Falls, Montana requesting a meeting for the unhoused in Great Falls to be hosted by AA at St. Vincent's Angel Room, a location where the unhoused can get food, clothing, hair cuts, showers, and laundry service. The executive director noted that many of the unhoused feel stigmatized by their lack of housing to attend established AA meetings, and many of these meetings are logistically difficult for this population to attend. While deliberating the feasibility of this request, this member of AA researched which AA material would be most appropriate to have at the Angel Room. Much to her amazement, she discovered there is no pamphlet, brochure, or any other type of AA literature specific to the unhoused population. This proposal is to rectify this grievous omission.

Before submitting this item, we reviewed current AA literature and were unable to find any references to the unhoused or homeless, including in any of the following pamphlets:

- From Safety and AA: Our Common Welfare
- Access To A.A. - Members Share On Overcoming Barriers
- Alcoholics Anonymous in Your Community
- Problems Other Than Alcohol
- Do You Think You're Different?

The following articles provide some general background information on the prevalence of homelessness and ways in which alcoholism affects this population. They are included as background material for the committee's consideration.

- Mike Loverde, InterventionHelpline.com, Homeless Alcoholics – A Double Stigma That Can Interfere With Recovery (May 24, 2019), available at <https://interventionhelpline.com/blog/homeless-alcoholics-a-double-stigma-that-caninterfere-with-recovery/>.
- Peter Grinspoon, MD, Harvard Health Publishing, Poverty, Homelessness, And Social Stigma Make Addiction More Deadly (Sept. 28, 2021), available at <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/poverty-homelessness-and-social-stigma-makeaddiction-more-deadly-202109282602>.
- AddictionHelp.com, Addiction and Homelessness (April 28, 2023), available at <https://www.addictionhelp.com/addiction/homelessness/>.

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(5) What are the intended/expected outcomes if this proposed item is approved?

The hope is that when this item is approved, a pamphlet will be developed for Alcoholics Anonymous and the Unhoused. This pamphlet can be used in both inward and outward facing capacities. Members from the AA fellowship will have the opportunity to share their experience, strength, and hope with being homeless or unhoused as content for the pamphlet. The pamphlet will allow people from the unhoused population to see themselves in and on the front of some of our literature and know that they have a place in AA. Professionals also be able to use this pamphlet as a resource specifically for the unhoused and homeless.

There is an understanding that, in the future, this demographic of people may be addressed within the "Do you think you are different?" pamphlet, and we believe this is needed as a separate and distinct pamphlet not to be buried in the pages of another pamphlet and grouped with other "issues".

(6) Provide a primary contact for the submission.

Kacie N. - Panel 73 Area 40 Montana Delegate

(7) Final comments:

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