

## **2020 Report from the Panel 70 NIA Registrar Winter Assembly – December 12, 2020**

The new group forms and group change forms continue to come in from the district secretaries and registrars. As your area registrar, I continue to send them to the records department at the General Service Office (GSO). Although their response time has greatly improved, it is a very cumbersome process. Well, that will be changing soon with the announcement that the "Fellowship Connection" which is the new name for the "My Portal" database that stores all the group records at GSO, will become available for use by the area registrars on December 24<sup>th</sup>! This will streamline the process and provide immediate access to all the group, district and area contact information which we have only been able to obtain from spreadsheets that GSO has provided in the last couple months.

Another challenge that will continue to unfold is the question about registering online groups at the GSO. In the past there were a couple options. If you had an online or virtual group that had no geographical location, you were asked to register either as an online group or with the A.A. Online intergroup.

Group Services at GSO provided this statement about the registering of groups, "As embodied in the Fourth Tradition, the formation and operation of an A.A. Group resides within the group conscience of its members. While, hopefully, every A.A. group adheres closely to the guiding principles of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, A.A.W.S. neither monitors nor oversees the activities or practice of any A.A. group. Groups listed with G.S.O. are listed at their own request. A listing does not constitute or imply approval or endorsement of any group's approach to or practice of the Traditional A.A. program."

An online group registered at GSO is assigned a 9-digit number to use for corresponding with GSO and making contributions. It means that GSO has a record of them. However, they call it a "group i.d." rather than a group service number because it's not the same as what face-to-face groups receive in that they are linked to a district and area.

The Online Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous, aa-intergroup.org, is a service entity established pursuant to Tradition Nine of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to operate on behalf of the participating online AA groups in accordance with AA's Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts. The Intergroup exists to aid the online groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. The Intergroup (OIAA)...is just another 'Intergroup/Central Office' just like the hundreds in the US/Canada....except it serves the digital/virtual community. In the last eight months they have grown from a little over 200 meetings to over 3,000.

We typically register groups with the GSO that have a geographical area. But recently the requests and questions that I have received are can we register an online or virtual group. The answer received from group services at GSO is "has the district discussed this and approved having this group participate in the district? And likewise, has Area 20 discussed this and approved having this group participate in the area?"

Now some of you might say, what is the big deal, just put an address on there even if it is not the location of the meeting and that could be a quick fix. As your area registrar I felt this was putting a band aid on the issue instead of addressing it head on. This is not a situation that is going away, our new norm may very well and most likely continue way past the days of our current pandemic restrictions. Although some group and meetings will go back to in person meetings, there may be some who find the virtual option something they want to continue.

So, my task is to ask all of you, as the fellowship of Area 20, are there any objections to having a group register with connection to a district or area? That request comes in the form of the motion we will discuss today, requesting that our Delegate Marilyn F. send a letter to add an agenda item to the General Service Conference to discuss this issue. If your group would like more information and/or has a concern please send it in writing to [registrar@aa-nia.org](mailto:registrar@aa-nia.org).

Please send updated group change and new group forms are on the NIA Website <http://aa-nia.org/group-forms/>. All communication of changes and updates should be sent to the [registrar@aa-nia.org](mailto:registrar@aa-nia.org) mailbox or mailed to Area Registrar, PO Box 524, Crystal Lake, IL 60039-0524. Thank you for allowing me to be of service.

Respectfully submitted,  
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