



June 5, 2020

***Re-Opening A.A. Meetings as COVID-19 public health restrictions are eased***

Dear Fellow Area 59 Member:

As Pennsylvania Public Health officials lift some social restrictions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, county by county, many A.A. home groups are facing decisions about returning to in-person gatherings. The following information is intended only to assist your home group's conscience as you discuss and decide if and how your group will re-open. Your Area 59 Officers stand ready to help you find information and share experiences; however, we do not set policy nor intend to issue any public health or regulatory advice. Each group is autonomous and we encourage your group to seek the proper governmental and public health guidance. Remember, the law of the land does not stop at the door of A.A.

Area Officers are responsible for conducting only Area 59 Committee-sponsored events. *After serious consideration, we have decided that all Area 59 Committee-sponsored events will be conducted via our Zoom-licensed platform through October 31, 2020 at a minimum.* Your Officers and the Convention Committee continue to plan alternatives for our E.P.G.S.A. Convention – scheduled for November 13, 14 & 15, in case we need to respond to unforeseen circumstances. *However, we currently have not decided to cancel our in-person convention.* Please visit our website for details of Area 59 events: [www.area59aa.org](http://www.area59aa.org). ***In all of our event decisions, the safety of all Members is paramount.***

Some thoughts to consider regarding re-opening:

1. Individual Members with any questions about underlying health issues that may pre-dispose them to a higher risk of COVID-19 infection and its consequences should consult their private physician before making decisions to attend any indoor or densely populated events. Information about social distancing as of June 5, 2020:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

2. Learn and follow local Public Health (county & state) guidance & regulations. (A.A. Traditions are not above the law.) For the current (June 5, 2020) PA guidance the following link may help.

<https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/#RedPhase>

3. Communicate and work with your group's landlord. Understand and respect their requirements as you plan to re-open.

4. Understand and plan for proper social distancing and cleaning procedures. Visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for specific guidance.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-faith-based/faq.html>

5. For personal and community health, educate yourself about the symptoms of COVID-19 infection. If you have any doubts about your exposure, contact your doctor and refrain from attending in-person events. Information about this (as of June 5, 2020) can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

6. Finally, stay aware of your specific local situation. Public Health guidance has to be somewhat broad by its nature and there may be some "pockets" within a town or county that experience a "spike" in transmission of infectious disease. For example, within a community of workers where they labor in close quarters and an outbreak occurs. Again, stay in touch with county health officials and local news.

The above points are meant to assist your decision-making process under Tradition 4. Your meeting format script that the chairperson reads aloud will be a good place to announce your group's decisions and suggestions for meeting attendees or any requirements imposed by the landlord (e.g. 6-ft. social distancing, mask wearing, handholding or no handholding during the closing, the use of hand sanitizer, the use of disinfecting wipe requests for cleaning surfaces, etc.). Your Area Officers will be looking for ways to allow home groups and districts to share experience – neither guidance, nor governance - as we move toward re-opening.

If you have questions, please contact your District DCM or any Area Officer.

In Fellowship & Service,  
Area 59, Panel 69 Officers  
[www.area59aa.org](http://www.area59aa.org)