

Board of Trustees Statement December 15, 2021

After many hours of discussion, which included a special meeting dedicated to both our 2022 Annual Business Conference/Meeting (ABC/M) and the future of how the ABC/M will be held, the Board of Trustees has come to a group conscience. We heard and appreciated the heartfelt feedback we received from the Fellowship's wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints. We discussed at length the details of holding another virtual-only ABC/M, an in-person ABC/M, or a combination in-person/virtual integrated (hybrid) event for 2022.

Our final decision is that an in-person ABC/M in 2022 would provide the best opportunity for an inclusive, recovery-based group conscience, giving the Fellowship the safe and engaging spaces we have had in Annual Business Conference/Meetings of the past. While this year's ABC/M will not include an International Recovery Convention (IRC), we believe it is necessary for our fellowship to serve the addict who still suffers across this globe by coming together in-person to conduct our business. The 2022 ABC/M will be held in Sacramento, California, thereby honoring the original, two-year commitment made to Sacramento's Intergroup, which was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As facts became separated from theories, this option became the most viable. We cannot list all factors, but it is important to share a few significant points that weighed heavily on our decision. In strongly considering virtual participation, it became clear that time and other constraints create formidable obstacles for a successful integrated/hybrid option at which all in-person and virtual participants can see and hear one another. Our current lack of sufficient volunteers willing to assist or serve on the Board Technology Committee (BTC), indicates we are not prepared to guarantee a successful hybrid event as early as 2022.

We are committed to hosting a fully integrated hybrid ABC/M in 2023 to gain as much participation from all who wish to attend, no matter where they are or how they are situated. We must successfully merge these two mediums (in-person and virtual) into an unprecedented format that will endure the test of time for years to come. To gracefully and effectively execute this, we will immediately begin strategizing and will use the 2022 in-person event to prepare for 2023. We expect to outsource the complicated technical tasks to a third party that specializes in hybrid conference events and will work with our volunteers and Staff. However, for the time being, we must first restore faith in the in-person meeting format by utilizing the experienced planning resources we already have at our disposal and focusing those efforts towards holding a successful event while accommodating best health and safety practices in light of ongoing COVID-19 concerns and preparing for the hybrid future.

We heard some of you share the in-person format puts a financial burden on intergroups; therefore, we are committed to fostering inclusion at the 2022 ABC/M by applying additional financial resources to lowering the overall cost. Eliminating the Travel Equalization Fund (TEF) fee while increasing TEF funds from FWS is one possibility. We hope to receive budgeted amounts of contributions and merchandise orders to maximize the funds available to lower the costs of participation.

Attending an ABC/M requires an immense commitment from each delegate, and we recognize this isn't entirely quantifiable by finances. A delegate must pour time and energy into full

participation during an ABC/M so the quality of group conscience can be upheld. For this reason, we understand not everyone is in a position to commit to being a delegate, whether virtual or in-person. We note that as in the past, we expect Conference Committees will encourage virtual participation in their meetings at the 2022 ABC/M through Zoom and conference calls.

Thank you for sharing your experiences; we were grateful to learn from them throughout our discussions. The world has changed considerably over the past few years, and we intend to change along with it. We ask for your patience and grace while we navigate uncharted territory and continue to commit to do what is best for the greater good.