Southern California Policy for Resolving Group and Member Concerns:

Clarification of the *Policy* that
was approved by the Assembly in 2016

History/Background

The Southern California World Service (SCWS) Assembly has participated in multiple discussions regarding Al-Anon groups that may not be adhering to the Legacies, and whose practices may negatively affect Al-Anon as a whole.

(SCWS Bulletins, May and Nov, 2010, "Hot Topics")

History/Background*

- **2011**: The World Service Policy Committee formed a Thought Force on "Do Not Refer" following a Policy Discussion at the 2011 WSC.

- Their charge was to develop a list of principles that Areas can use…
  - When determining that a group is not adhering to the Twelve Traditions.
  - To remediate their lack of adherence
  - To support groups to successfully adhere to the Twelve Traditions

*[*World Service Office (WSO) Area Meeting List Publishing Policy Development Resources*, Dec. 2018 (p.3-9)]

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History/Background

Some principles the Thought Force listed* were:

- The well-being of the group must come first.

- Every group should reflect Al-Anon's Traditions and policies.

- It is important to talk to each other and reason things out.

- Mutual respect is fundamental. Dominance should be avoided.

- Our Traditions guard against distortion and dilution.

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History/Background

- **2012**: The "Do Not Refer" Policy Discussion* continued at WSC. Area Delegates expressed their concerns by sharing examples of:
  o Groups that consistently use non-Conference Approved Literature (CAL)
  o Groups that decide to reword the Steps, Traditions, and other CAL
  o Groups that dictate a particular type of sponsorship

*[*WSO's Area Meeting List Publishing Policy Development Resources*, Dec. 2018 (p. 10-13)]

History/Background*

- Areas requested that WSO support their decision by applying a code to the "do not refer" meeting, so the meeting would not be referred by WSO to new members by phone or available on the WSO website.

- The WSO Policy Committee asked the Areas to bring the discussion on how to handle groups operating outside of the Legacies back to their Area.

*[*WSO's Area Meeting List Publishing Policy Development Resources*, Dec. 2018 (p. 10;12)]

History/Background*

2012: Our Southern California World Service Area Board created a Thought Force:

"How Can Southern California World Service (SCWS) Support Districts and Intergroups in Dealing With Groups Whose Activities Do Not Consider Al-Anon as a Whole".

*(SCWS Thought Force Study, 2014)

History/Background*

2014: The Thought Force concluded with a recommendation to create a Task Force "to prepare an Area Policy to help meetings remain consistent with Al-Anon Traditions and policies as presented in the Service Manual." SCWS Group Representatives (GRs) voted to create a Task Force.

*(SCWS Thought Force Study, 2014)

History/Background*

- **2016**: The Task Force presented their complete report and the proposed policy at the November Assembly.

- The Policy provided a clear, orderly process for communication, discussion and education. There was also a process by which groups could become relisted.

- More than two-thirds of the Area's Group Representatives (GRs) voted to approve the new policy called the *Southern California Policy for Resolving Group and Member Concerns.*

(Listserv Message regarding Policy purpose, Nov. 22, 2016.)

History/Background

July 2018*: Motion from the World Service Office *"that the Board of Trustees direct the WSO Staff to utilize the Policy Committee criteria presented at the 2012 World Service Conference to ensure that an Area has established a fair and balanced "Do Not Refer" and "Re-Refer" policy. These criteria allow the WSO to support Area "Do Not Refer" group conscience decisions and remove group meetings from the WSO meeting list. Groups not being referred by the WSO remain active and registered."*

(WSO Chairperson of the Board Letter, July 2018, posted Aug. 2018)

History/Background

- **Sept., 2018**: *The Southern California Policy for Resolving Group and Member Concerns* was submitted to World Service for review.

- **July, 2019**: The Area received a response from WSO regarding our *Policy*. The WSO offered several suggestions for clarifying our *Policy*.

History/Background

- Between August, 2019 and January, 2020 the SCWS Area Officers communicated with WSO, and other Areas who submitted their Policy to WSO, regarding the clarification of our *Policy*.

- Based on the revisions recommended by WSO and the WSO document, *Area Meeting List Publishing Policy Development Resources (Materials to support Areas develop a fair and balanced policy)*, the Area Policy was revised*(draft) to reflect the recommendations.

* (Two Area Officers and two members of the original *Policy* Task Force were involved with drafting the revisions to the *Policy.*) 11

History/Background

- A conference was held Feb. 25 with three members of WSO, three SCWS Officers and a member of the original Policy Task Force.

- The revised Policy (draft) was emailed to WSO before the meeting.

- The purpose of the meeting was to gain clarity regarding WSO's previous recommendations, and to obtain feedback on the revised *Policy* draft.

WSO's response to the revisions was positive. Their final approval would be contingent upon:

1. Approval of this draft by the SCWS Board, and

2. Approval of this draft by the Assembly.

The SCWS Board met on March 8, 2020 and voted to approve this revised draft.