

Permanent Electronic Meetings (PEMs) and our Southern California World Service (SCWS) Area Planning for our Future!



Assembly Thought Force Presentation
November 20, 2021
(Revised October, 2021)

What was the purpose of the PEM Thought Force?

- A small **Thought Force** was formed to review the latest information from the **World Service Conference (WSC)** and the **World Service Office (WSO)** regarding **Permanent Electronic Meetings (PEMs)** and how this might affect our Area.
- The main resource the Thought Force used was from the WSO: **“Transforming Electronic Meetings into Al-Anon Family Groups: A Guide for Geographically Based Areas in the WSC Structure”**. This document is located on our SCWS website:
<https://www.scws-al-anon.org/area-world-service-assembly-meeting-information/>

What are we asking of the Group Representatives today?

- **At the end of the presentation** we will ask for your input to know in what direction you want the Area to go next. It is our Area's **Group Representatives (GRs)** who will make the final decision.
- **You can decide if...**
 - **yes**, you wish for our Area to move forward with the *idea of possibly* including Permanent Electronic Meetings in our Area structure at some point in our future?


OR...

- **no**, you wish to table the entire topic for now.



Background Information

1. What are Permanent Electronic Meetings (PEMs)?

- Pre-dated the pandemic (1990's). Electronic meetings were originally thought of as a supplement to regular attendance at “face-to-face” Al-Anon groups. (*Electronic Meetings Fact Sheet, S-60;*) 
- Groups can “register as an Al-Anon electronic meeting with the World Service Office (WSO), provided that, as a meeting they have no other affiliation, their meetings are open to all Al-Anon members, and they abide by the Traditions.”(Electronic Al-Anon Meeting Guideline, G-39)
- Platform examples: Conference Call; Chat Room; Skype; Bulletin Board; Zoom; Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app; Email; and more.



Background Information, continued

2. What is the current service structure for PEMs?

- A PEM is not connected to a Geographic Area, therefore they are not part of a District and do not have a Group Representative (GR).
- They are connected to WSO by a group member who is their Current Mailing Address (CMA).
- The CMAs meet quarterly with a WSO staff member. This staff member helps carry their “voice” to the World Service Conference.

Background Information, continued



3. Exciting News for Al-Anon's Future!

- **April 2021:** “Al-Anon’s largest group conscience, the World Service Conference (WSC), has recognized Electronic Meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups and they have become part of our Al-Anon service structure.”*
- **Motion #6 at 2021 WSC:** To modify text throughout the “World Service Handbook” section of the Service Manual (p. 134-171) to eliminate the restriction for an Area to be defined by geographic boundaries and to simplify language to incorporate both physical and electronic meeting locations.
- **Conclusion:** This means that Permanent Electronic Meetings (PEMs) will eventually have the opportunity to be part of the larger WSC Al-Anon service structure!

*From: “Transforming Electronic Meetings into Al-Anon Family Groups: A Guide for Geographically Based Areas in the WSC Structure”

The Future for Permanent Electronic Meetings

All Permanent Electronic Meetings (PEMs) will automatically belong to the Non-Geographic, Electronic Meeting Area.

- This new overlay/virtual Area is in the process of forming.
- PEMs are currently electing Group Representatives (previously only had a CMA)
- **Nov.15-Dec.15:** PEMs elect Temporary Area Chairperson via web conference.
- **Jan. 22, 2022:** Non-Geographic Area Assembly will be held to elect a Delegate
- The Electronic Meeting Area is on track to be officially recognized at the **April 2022 World Service Conference.**

Could a PEM join our SCWS Geographic Area in the future?

- **After the 2021 WSC**, Delegates were encouraged to begin the conversation about admitting groups which meet only electronically with their Areas. They were asked to “Plan when GRs can bring the voice of their groups to an Area Assembly, if possible, prior to the 2022 WSC.”*
- “Geographic Areas have a year (from the April 2021 WSC) before the WSO can provide them the opportunity to begin registering groups which meet only electronically....Areas can take as much time as they need before deciding when and how to begin registering groups which meet electronically.”*

From: “Transforming Electronic Meetings into Al-Anon Family Groups: A Guide for Geographically Based Areas in the WSC Structure”

Could a PEM join our SCWS Geographic Area... continued



This could be a possibility after the 2022 WSC, provided that...

1. The 2022 WSC votes to admit the new Electronic Meeting Area to the World Service Conference.
2. The SCWS Area GRs decide to continue exploring this possibility.
3. A detailed plan for admitting a PEM to our SCWS Area is developed, including KBDM pros/cons for this possibility.
4. The Group Representatives vote to accept a plan for allowing PEMs to petition to join our SCWS Area.

If our members want the Electronic Meeting Thought Force to continue...

- **Additional members to the Thought Force** will be appointed by the Area Chair. It will include “members-at-large” and members in Area service beyond the group level (GR, DR, etc.), especially those who have had experience with Electronic Meetings.

- **The Thought Force “Charge” will be expanded** and *might* include:
 - Answering the KBDM questions related to the pros/cons of accepting PEMs into the Area structure
 - Drafting ideas of how our Area might add PEMS (maybe an “overlay” Electronic Meeting District?)
 - Possible criteria for accepting a PEM into our Area. (A percentage of the PEMs members would have to live in our Area?)

Why might we consider adding PEMs into our SCWS Area in the future?

Example:

- Groups in our Area created Temporary Electronic Meetings (TEM) to take the place of their face-to-face meetings during COVID pandemic.
- Many of these “temporary” groups still exist, with the majority of their Zoom members residing in our Area. Because they are **not** WSO-registered PEMs, they can still have a GR who represents their Group at District meetings and SCWS Assemblies.
- If a TEM decides to become permanent and register with WSO as a PEM, they will lose their GR connection with the SCWS Area. They will **not** have “voice and vote” in our Area business.
- However, if our Area decides in the future to make provisions for a PEM (such as described above) to be part of our Area structure, the group could have a GR who would have “voice/vote” at District meetings and Area Assemblies.

April 2021 World Service Conference (WSC):
Permanent Electronic Meetings (PEMs) Become Al-Anon Family Groups (AFG)
New “Electronic” (non-geographic) Area Created by WSO



Geographic Areas:
Delegate brings WSC information back to Assembly to begin discussion.
(May, 2021)



Permanent Electronic Meeting Thought Force:
Appointed to gather information regarding *possibility* of accepting
PEMs into our Southern California World Service (SCWS) Area.
Target date: Assembly, 11-20-21



At the Assembly, Group Representatives (GRs) will decide to:
Continue with the Thought Force and add members to TF, OR... table the topic.



PEM Thought Force:
gathers more information;
answers KBDM ?s



Table the Topic



Where do we go from here?

We need your input to know what direction you want our Area to go. Our Area's Group Representatives will make this decision.

Do you wish for our Area to move forward with exploring the possibility of including Permanent Electronic Meetings in our Area's structure in the future?

- A. If “yes”, then we move forward with adding members to the Thought Force to continue the research and KBDM process.
- B. If “no”, we will table the discussion for now.

Let's start with Questions then Comments.



Reminder:

Raise your Zoom hand (click on “reactions”, “raise hand”)

1-2 Minutes at the “mic”

Please lower your hand if another member asks your question.