

2016 CAR Video Script

Regional Motions 3–8

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This is the third of four videos covering material in the 2016 *Conference Agenda Report* (or *CAR* for short). This video covers the regional motions numbered three through eight.

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Please keep in mind, these videos only cover the main points of the *CAR*. We encourage all members to read the *CAR* itself for more information, including the full World Board responses, as well as the financial impact and policy affected for each motion. Please visit www.na.org/conference for the complete 2016 *CAR* and the other videos.

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We approached this *CAR* and regional motions with a clear objective of trying to help. If a region or Conference participant had an idea that they would like the Fellowship to consider, we did everything within our power to try to help them articulate their ideas in a way that was clear, understandable, and met WSC policy. Many delegates began to communicate ideas much earlier than the deadline to submit a motion, but it still took us over 90 days from beginning to end. It is a very time-consuming, communication-intensive process, but we believe the time and effort have paid off.

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We have a first in this *CAR*—a regional motion with more than one maker. Five regions had submitted motions that contained related ideas, though the motions themselves were quite different from each other. We encouraged them to have discussions with each other, and as a result of those discussions, one region pulled a motion and three delegates worked together to create a single motion jointly submitted from their three regions. We believe this combined result makes the *CAR* workshop process easier because members will not have to discuss three different but related motions.

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Whether or not we support the idea contained in a motion is not the issue. Our responsibility was to ensure that the regions had an opportunity to express their ideas as clearly as possible and to make it as easy as possible for members to understand what they are being asked to discuss and decide.

Additionally, we have agreed to one delegate's suggestion to include ideas that regions would like to have considered at WSC 2016 under separate cover as part of the CAT mailing at the end of January 2016.

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Motion 3: That the NA World Board develop a project plan which includes a budget and timeline to create an informational pamphlet specifically about mental illness and recovery for consideration at the 2018 World Service Conference.

Intent: To have a fellowship approved, clear Narcotics Anonymous message about the important issue of mental illness and recovery that is available in a pamphlet format.

Maker: Eastern New York Region

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Rationale by Region: While there is material on the issue of mental illness in the booklet, "In Times of Illness," it does not adequately address the multitude of issues that face addicts in recovery who also suffer from diagnosed mental illness: how the Narcotics Anonymous program balances the need for prescribed mind and mood altering medication management with the idea of complete abstinence; the stigma associated with mental illness and fear of judgment from others in recovery;

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the possible need for additional therapeutic treatment outside of self-help groups; how groups can help make addicts suffering from mental illness feel welcome in NA meetings; the sponsor-sponsee relationship and importance of not treating a sponsor like a doctor; and other relevant issues. The Narcotics Anonymous message about mental illness and recovery continues to be a gray area, and it will be helpful to both newcomers and oldtimers alike to have a fellowship approved, widely accessible information pamphlet available as a resource.

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World Board Response:

- ◆ We've added this idea to the literature survey included in the *CAR*.
- ◆ We hope that the survey will result in discussions about what the Fellowship as a whole wants to see developed.
- ◆ If adopted, this motion would direct the World Board to develop a project plan for consideration at WSC 2018.

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PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

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Motion 4: That all future approved World Board Minutes be posted on na.org for download.

Intent: To create accessibility to all World Board minutes.

Maker: Show Me Region

No rationale was provided for this motion.

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World Board Response:

- ◆ Copies of approved minutes from World Board meetings are provided to any member who requests them, but there are several reasons why we do not post the World Board minutes online.

- ◆ NAWS News, which is published after each Board meeting, is our regular reporting mechanism. It is produced in five languages at an annual cost of approximately \$25,000
- ◆ Our minutes are only in English, and we are not clear what purpose it would serve to post them online.
- ◆ NAWS News contains a fuller description of our activity and thoughts on issues than our minutes because it covers our decisions and thinking to date on issues and gives context and explanation for our activity and discussions.
- ◆ As a board, we interact by email, webinars, and other means to develop ideas and have ongoing discussions that are not reflected in any one set of minutes.
- ◆ We also do not post World Board minutes online because of possible legal implications of doing so. NA World Services is often dragged into lawsuits for local issues because parties bringing a lawsuit look for the NA service body with the most resources. Minutes posted online are considered legally binding records of a corporation and may provide more ammunition for these types of legal actions. If we are required to post our minutes online, we would most likely change the style of our minutes to include only what is legally required.

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PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

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Motion 5: That all Financial Reporting for the World Convention of Narcotics Anonymous be provided in a detailed line item format and not in a summary as is currently available. This report will be posted on na.org and be downloadable.

Intent: Financial Transparency

Maker: Show Me Region

No rationale was provided for this motion.

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World Board Response:

- ◆ We report all NA World Services income and expense against the budget adopted at the World Service Conference; World Convention income and expense is no different.
- ◆ If this motion is supported, the WSC would need to provide us with more clear parameters of what sort of reporting is desired. We were unable to get clarity from the motion maker about what type of information is being sought, other than “a detailed line item format.”
- ◆ The World Convention is a relatively small part of World Services’ budget. For the 2014–2016 budget cycle the World Convention is budgeted at income and expense of less than a million dollars in a budget with an operating income of over \$16,000,000.
- ◆ Listing all of the detail for a World Convention would not provide particularly useful information. As an example, the audio visual costs for the event are usually paid in several large payments. Listing the payments would not tell you whether the cost was for meetings,

special events, translations, NAWS onsite, or any of the other places we might use AV in a convention.

- ◆ To annotate and explain the hundreds and hundreds of invoices so that they are understandable does not seem to be a particularly prudent use of finite staff resources.
- ◆ We do believe we need to discuss the future of the World Convention but do not see this as a beneficial way to focus that conversation.

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PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

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Motion 6: That all face to face World Board meetings be open to any NA member on a space available basis; unless the topic(s) being discussed are required by law to be confidential.

Intent: To return the World Board to the common practice that other NA boards and committees follow.

Maker: San Diego Imperial Region

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Rationale by Region: All service boards and committees in NA have always followed this practice, including world service boards and committees until the World Board decided to close their meetings to World Board members and staff only in the last few years.

We feel it is important that our World Board reflect the common practice of the other service boards and committees in NA; not doing so sets them apart which some members view as thinking one is different or better than; not in the spirit of anonymity and in our opinion creates unnecessary mistrust of the World Board.

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We understand that the World Board is a corporate board but feel that it is an NA service board first and then a corporate board when required to be by law, no different than any of our other service boards and committees. We appreciate the experience of our World Board members and believe it would be beneficial to any member who gets the chance to sit in on one of their meetings.

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World Board Response:

- ◆ The question of whether to open Board meetings to interested members was raised when we held a meeting in San Diego. We decided not to open that meeting, and Board meetings in general, not to be elitist or secretive, but in the interests of parity and effectiveness.
- ◆ It seemed unfair to allow observers at our meetings simply because they happened to be in close proximity to San Diego (or Chatsworth).
- ◆ Even if there were an equitable way to open Board meetings we still don't believe it is a good idea. We are not as effective when we function in a goldfish bowl.

- ◆ Attending a single Board meeting without context can actually give an incorrect impression of where our discussions are on a particular topic. Yet some members would most likely post discussions and remarks without that context regardless.
- ◆ We used to have an open Board meeting during the World Service Conference week, but we discontinued that practice because we found that having discussions and making decisions in front of an audience inhibited our communication and made our discussions more self-conscious and less effective.

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PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

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Motion 7: That if there continues to be a WSC Participants Discussion Board on NA.org that it be made accessible to non WSC participants; only for viewing, not posting.

Intent: To allow any interested member to see what our WSC participants are discussing regarding fellowship and world service issues.

Maker: San Diego Imperial Region

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Rationale by Region: Our region feels this is another way for our members to get more information and different views on issues facing our world services and fellowship. We feel that the mistrust this discussion board being closed creates with some of our members is totally unnecessary and opening it up to viewing by the membership will alleviate those concerns.

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World Board Response:

- ◆ Making the WSC participant board viewable by Conference participants only was a decision of the WSC, not the World Board.
- ◆ The discussions at the Conference related to the issue were about having the freedom to talk through and develop ideas with other Conference participants before all of the details of those conversations became public; participants wanted to be able to brainstorm or have informal discussions without risking being labelled as “wrong.”
- ◆ Most zonal and regional committee discussion boards and Facebook pages that we are aware of are limited to the members of that body.
- ◆ The real issue seems to be how to make any online portal feel relevant, valuable, and safe from attack. Despite the Conference’s decision to close the WSC participant board, posts are often reposted on social media without permission of the participants who wrote them. That may be part of the reason why only ten participants are responsible for over 70% of the posts on the board. Over 250 participants are eligible for posting to this board, yet only a few participate. We know there is a need for a forum where conference participants can talk together, but we have yet to find an effective way to do that.

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PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

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Motion 8: To direct NAWS to produce a low-cost paperback English version of the Basic Text which contains only the first ten chapters called “Our Program”.

Intent: To provide a cost effective means to carry our message and fulfill our primary purpose.

Maker: Oklahoma Region

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Rationale by Region: The OK Region feels that creating a version of our Basic Text that can be inexpensively distributed to addicts newly exposed to Narcotics Anonymous is crucial to our primary purpose. We believe strongly that if we can get more of this literature into the hands of addicts, they will have a chance to identify and find a new way to live.

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Our initial motion had specifics about the pricing of this book. While we are hoping that the price of this book would not exceed more than 100% of total cost of production, we understand the language of the motion needs to be less specific. Our more general wording reflects our trust in the process and the faith that the intent of our motion will be upheld. The OK Region believes the passing of this motion would further enhance our ability to offer “Our Program” to more addicts seeking recovery.

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World Board Response:

- ◆ It is no secret that NA World Services funds fellowship development efforts of all types—including workshops and face-to-face interactions, thousands of calls and emails, translations of NA literature, a variety of public relations efforts around the world, and even the five NA World Service locations throughout the world, the WSC, the World Board, and its workgroups—largely through the funds from sales of the Basic Text.
- ◆ It would be impossible to encapsulate the work of World Services in the course of a year in the small space we have here. The NAWS Annual Report is the closest thing we have, and last year’s was 60 pages plus 40 pages of financial reports. We encourage you to take a look at it online and in addition, if you have not already done so, to read the Pricing of NA Literature section in the CAR.

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- ◆ We believe the text remains affordable at \$11.55. The conscience of the Fellowship has seemed to bear this out. The motion to produce a lower cost Basic Text has been before the WSC at least nine times and has never passed.
- ◆ *An Introductory Guide to NA* is an inexpensive alternative that contains the basics of the NA program, including chapter four, “How It Works,” of the Basic Text. More prolific use of the

Intro Guide or the Little White Book would be an effective way to carry the message without undermining a primary source of World Services' income.

- ◆ The only way that we know to represent the potential financial impact of this motion is to assume that all English Basic Text sales would become sales of this version containing the first ten chapters. This would result in an income reduction of about 1.3 million dollars per year. Please see the *CAR* for additional information.

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PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION

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We hope this video has helped in your discussion of this material. Please note that there is another video that focuses on the remaining six regional motions, as well as two other videos that summarize the other contents of the *CAR*.

You can download a copy of the *Conference Agenda Report* online at www.na.org/conference or order a hard copy from NA World Services.

If you have any questions, please reach out and let us know: worldboard@na.org.