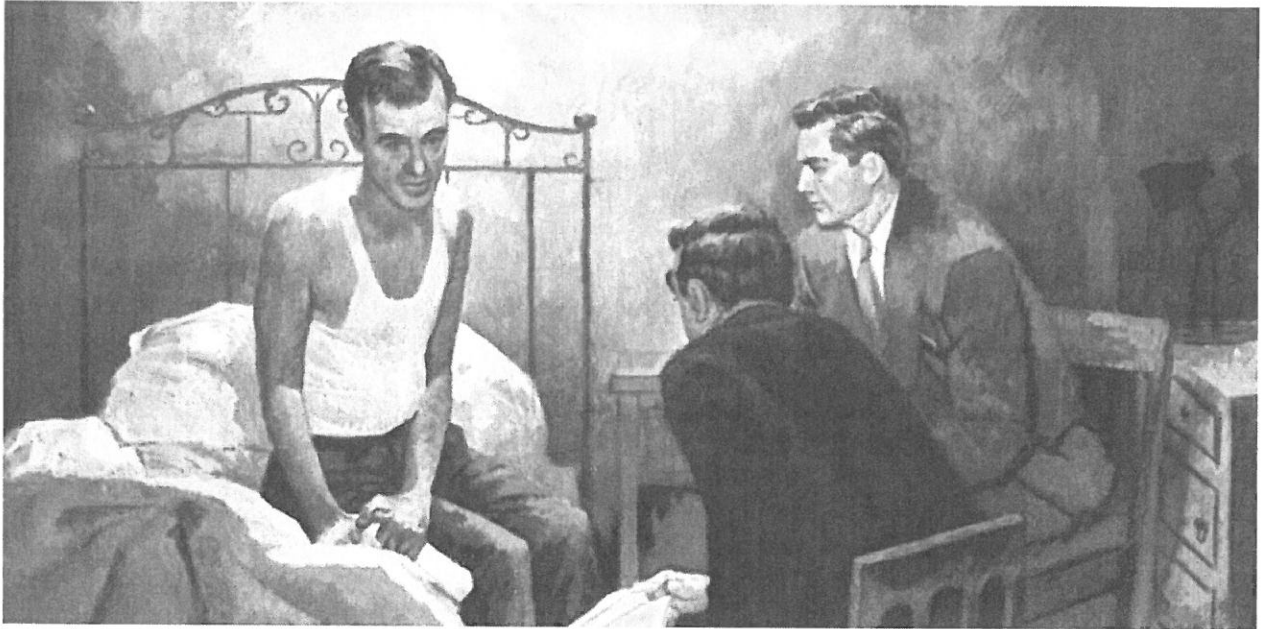


## **THE HAND OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**



***“When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. to be there. And for that, I am responsible.”*** According to a recent article in the New England Journal of Medicine, *“In the United States, 8 to 10% of people 12 years of age or older, or between 20 to 22 million people, are addicted to alcohol or other drugs.”*

The **Hand of AA** is a program recently begun to serve with Chippenham, Johnston Willis and most recently, St. Francis Hospitals to provide AA volunteers to be on-call to meet with patients suffering from alcohol addiction and provide information on the 12-Step program of recovery. If you would like more information on how you or your group can participate in this important role in our community, please send an email to [handofaa@gmail.com](mailto:handofaa@gmail.com) with your contact information. **To be considered, you must have at least one year of continuous sobriety, have worked all 12 Steps of the AA program and be actively working with other alcoholics as a sponsor or mentor.** There will also be a required hospital volunteer interview procedure.

If you want information on this program to invite other Richmond area hospitals to consider how they too might participate, we welcome your inquires as well. Please email me at [handofaa@gmail.com](mailto:handofaa@gmail.com)

***“Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”*** Tradition 5 of the AA Twelve Traditions

# “THE HAND OF AA” - Q & A

Thank you for your willingness to be the face and voice of HOPE to the suffering alcoholic who has expressed a desire to stop drinking and ask for help from our Alcoholics Anonymous volunteers. This short summary is offered as an overview of how the program will work in the coming months and what your individual role in making our partnership with HCA Chippenham and Johnston Willis Hospitals (“CJW”) a success.

**WHAT’S EXPECTED OF ME?** As a volunteer cleared by CJW, you will accept responsibility for being “on call” for one week of your choosing to accept phone calls from hospital staff to arrange meetings with patients who are suffering from alcohol related issues and who have expressed a desire to meet with an AA representative. Your on-call week will start at midnight on Sunday for the following 7 days (until midnight the following Sunday) when the next volunteer will take over. I’ll email you a reminder on Sunday starting your shift.

**HOW WILL I BE CONTACTED?** We have a “cloud-PBX” telephone number established that allows us to forward calls from the CJW switchboards directly to our volunteers’ cell phones. The staff member will dial the hospital switchboard and ask to be connected to The Hand of AA and their call will be forwarded to your cell. You will take the information (name, room number, projected discharge date, etc.) and arrange to visit the patient within the next 24 hours or before they are discharged. If it goes to voice mail, try to call back to the staff member promptly.

**WHAT DO I DO WHEN I VISIT THE PATIENT?** This question is best answered in our Big Book and I highly recommend you read Chapter 7, *Working With Others* (pp 89-103) and also *Alcoholic Anonymous Number Three* (pp 182-192) to help you understand how this service works. Remember, you are there as much for your own sobriety as you are for the patient and you are encouraged to let them know that (*top of BB p 186*). Share as much of your story as necessary to get them comfortable telling you about themselves and their problems. Expect to encounter denial and reluctance and let them know you felt the same once. Be a LISTENER as much as possible. Ask them if they would like to attend an AA meeting and if they say “Yes” take their information down on the Bridging The Gap form. Leave them copies of “IS AA FOR YOU?” & “AA AT A GLANCE” and let them know someone will be in touch from Bridging The Gap when they are released to make arrangements to get them to a meeting.

**BRIDGING THE GAP INFO** When you leave, you need to use your smart phone to photo the info on the Bridging The Gap form and email it to [district29treatment.va@gmail.com](mailto:district29treatment.va@gmail.com) where it will be assigned to someone in the patient’s zip code area for contact and getting them to a meeting. At this point, your responsibility is complete until your next call during your on-call week.

**WHAT IF THE PATIENT IS NOT MY GENDER?** You will have an alternate volunteer name and telephone number that I will provide to you when your on-call shift starts on Sunday. Contact them and pass the info along so they can follow up.

**CAN I TAKE A SPONSEE?** ABSOLUTELY!!! This is a terrific way to introduce your sponsees to our Primary Purpose.

**WHAT IF I CANNOT BE ON CALL THAT WEEK?** You will have a calendar showing your and all of the volunteers weekly schedules and it will be your responsibility to reach out to one of them and arrange to switch or be covered when you cannot make the week you have volunteered to cover. Please let me know so I can change the calendar to reflect the changes.

Please share with me any feedback about your experiences during your on-call weeks so we can report to the hospitals on the success of the program. Best way is to drop me an email at [handofaa@gmail.com](mailto:handofaa@gmail.com)