

# An Open Letter to Health Care Professionals

Dear Colleague,

As physicians and mental health providers, we routinely recognize alcoholics through screening measures, physical and laboratory findings, social history, or concerns raised by family, friends, and employers. Please keep in mind that a referral to Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) can be a life-saving event for those with an alcohol use disorder.

There are over two million members of A.A. and over 65,000 groups in the U.S. and Canada and A.A. activity exists in approximately 180 countries. Not only are A.A. meetings easy to locate in almost all areas, but the only requirement for membership in A.A. is a desire to stop drinking. A.A. does not offer a “cure” for alcoholics, but rather a continuing process of recovery through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and not drinking one day at a time.

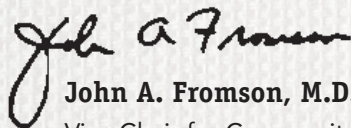
A.A. allows alcoholics to share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. As a psychiatrist engaged in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with alcohol use disorders and a past trustee (nonalcoholic) of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have seen the process of a sustained recovery facilitated by A.A. happen literally thousands of times.

Referring patients to A.A. is as simple as having them go to this section of the A.A. website: [Need Help With a Drinking Problem](#).

A brief overview of A.A. written for [health care professionals](#) can be found on the [information for professionals](#) page at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org).

As a healthcare professional, you are in a key position to provide guidance, education, and support for the still-suffering alcoholic. Thank you for your interest in A.A. and willingness to help.

Sincerely,



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