Three members of Metrowest Intergroup recently met electronically with 10 internal-medicine providers at the Post Office Square, Boston, office of Atrius Health.  The goal was to make more healthcare providers aware of OA as an option for their eating-disordered patients, much as they might suggest AA to their alcoholic patients.

One of the members has a history of bulimia and two have histories of binge-eating disorder. One was a member of color and two were white. Two are not only members, but also behavioral-health providers who routinely treat people with eating disorders.

They shared their experience, strength, and hope, and also their experiences with healthcare professionals who had referred them (and for the two professionals, their clients) to all kinds of specialists and treatment programs, but seldom to OA. They explained that the treatment philosophies of many of these programs dismiss our condition. For example, they expect patients to be able to eat every type of food, including foods that trigger cravings and relapses to the behaviors they are supposed to treat. The members related how they had emerged from such programs ever more demoralized, which ultimately lent them the willingness and humility to find OA.

They pointed out that many patients who go through bariatric surgery resume obsessive and compulsive behaviors if their physical, emotional, and spiritual problems have not also been addressed.

One member shared that even though she entered OA as an atheist and agnostic, she found and designed a Higher Power that works for her and helps keep her abstinent.

In their questions and comments, the Atrius providers showed willingness to learn more about the OA program and to offer it to their patients. The members directed them to the OA World Service and Metrowest Intergroup websites.

MWI intends to conduct more such forums for health professionals to carry the message. If you know of providers who'd be open to learning more, send email to contact@metrowestoa.org.