



Date: March 20, 2020
To: All SOWI Stakeholders
From: Kathleen J. Roach, MPH, MBA, President & CEO
Re: COVID-19 Update for March 20, 2020

After careful consideration of new developments regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), we have made the difficult decision to cancel all Special Olympics Wisconsin competitions and practices through May 31, 2020. While canceling events and practices is disappointing for athletes who love to train and compete alongside their friends, we know that our love of sport does not compare to the importance of protecting the health of our athletes and their surrounding communities.

This decision was made in light of updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the state of Wisconsin. On March 15, [the CDC recommended](#) postponing or canceling in-person events that consist of more than 50 people for the next eight weeks. On March 17, Governor Evers issued a [State of Emergency for Wisconsin](#) that prohibits social gatherings of 10 or more people.

Because of the seriousness of this pandemic and the sacrifices that will be necessary to minimize its impact on our society, it will require ALL of us doing what we can to help ensure that everyone stays as healthy as possible. We ask that all of the Special Olympics Wisconsin community join us in taking this seriously for the safety of all of our athletes and the safety of our communities at large. It's important that we all stay positive over the next few weeks. We'll get through this by supporting each other, practicing safe social distancing, monitoring and following the guidelines of the CDC, checking in on one another, and keeping our community strong via internet and phone technologies.

Now more than ever, it's imperative that we find creative and remote ways to maintain and even strengthen the connections that are so important to our athletes and communities. To that end, we have created a [SOWI Fitness at Home Facebook](#) group for our athletes and supporters during this time. The group will be used to share tips on staying active at home and serve as an inclusive virtual community where people with and without ID can stay fit, happy and connected, all from the comfort of their homes.

While we can't speculate at this time about what this pandemic means for events beyond May 31, we will continue to closely monitor the situation and its impact on our community. We will update the SOWI community as new information comes to light and new decisions are made. We know that outlooks and forecasts are changing by the day as this

Special Olympics Wisconsin

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unfolds. We are hopeful that communities will increasingly take this threat seriously and strictly adhere to the guidelines on social distancing, collectively turning the tide against the spread of this virus. If this mobilization takes place and this ends sooner rather than later, we look forward to our athletes soon being back in action showing the world what they are capable of.

Stay safe and remain “Brave in the Attempt”.