

Special Olympics Hawaii: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Date: March 6, 2020

To: Special Olympics Hawaii athletes, coaches, volunteers, families, and supporters

Subject: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Initial Update

In light of the ongoing concern regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19), Special Olympics Hawaii (SOHI) would like to update you regarding the impact of the virus to our program and its participants. Our first and foremost concern is the health and safety of everyone involved in the SOHI community. We have been working with Special Olympics, Inc. and local medical officials, and are taking guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), HI State Dept. of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Special Olympics Hawaii Activities

As of March 6, there is one confirmed case of COVID-19 in the state of Hawaii. The individual caught the virus out of state and there is no current evidence of community spread. We have not been advised to cancel any events at this time. However, as news of this virus continues to evolve, we are prepared to make changes to our programming on a moment's notice. With all incoming information, we will re-assess all events, including practices, Area and State competitions, health events, and fundraising events. We will continue to monitor the situation daily and will post updates as necessary to our website. www.Sohawaii.org.

Regarding SOHI events

- **If you are sick, or start to feel ill, STAY HOME. Do not come to practice. Do not come to competitions or any events.** Attendance requirements for practices and Area competitions will be adjusted so no athlete or partner should feel compelled to attend if they are feeling sick, or showing signs of illness.
- Anyone showing signs of illness at any SOHI event will be asked to go home.
- If you have been sick, do not attend a SOHI event (including practice) until you are well, have not had a fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing or symptom – altering medications) and are not coughing or sneezing.
- At all SOHI practices and events, we are asking all athletes, coaches, partners and volunteers to refrain from touching one another, including hugs and high fives. Instead we recommend fake high fives, or elbow bumps.
- SOHI will also modify, control, and/or eliminate the distribution of food and drink at events to ensure the safety of all.

Helping to Reduce the Spread of Illness

The CDC recommends that all of us follow these simple EVERYDAY practices to help prevent the spread of all respiratory viruses, including colds, the flu, and COVID-19.



- Get your flu shot. People with seasonal influenza will exhibit similar signs and symptoms as COVID-19 (fever and cough). If more people are protected against influenza, this will reduce confusion and the burden on our healthcare system.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth or nose with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Individuals at Higher Risk for Serious Illness

The majority of individuals who contract the coronavirus will likely experience mild symptoms. However, certain individuals are believed to be at higher risk for severe illness. These include:

- People over the age of 50, with the risk increasing with age.
- People who are immunocompromised
- People with underlying medical problems, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease and chronic lung diseases, such as COPD.

We urge all individuals at higher risk to seriously consider avoiding all events where large numbers of people will be within an arm's length of one another. While we understand this may be disappointing to many of our participants, everyone's long term health is of greater concern.

If you already feel sick

Symptoms include fever (100.4 F/38 C or higher), cough and shortness of breath. If you have symptoms, do not wait to seek help.

- Let someone know. Put on a mask, if you have one, to protect other people who are not sick.
- Call your doctor and let them know you are sick and explain your symptoms. If you do not have a regular doctor, go to an Urgent Care facility or the Minute Clinic at Longs Drugs.
- Your doctor will ask you questions and may test for the flu to rule out Coronavirus. If it is determined you have the Coronavirus the Department of Health will assist you further; please let Special Olympics Hawaii know if this should happen.
- If you have difficulty finding or getting to medical care or have question about how to care for yourself at home call Hawaii Department of Health at (808) 586-4586.

Going forward

SOHI will continue to provide updates as the situation develops via e-mail and updates to our website. Official COVID-19 information can be found at the following websites from the CDC, WHO, and HI Dept. of Health.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
<https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/advisories/novel-coronavirus-2019/>

Thank you for your ongoing dedication and support of Special Olympics Hawaii.