



March 12, 2020

Dear Sweet Adelines Member,

Last week, we sent you an email letting you know we have been closely monitoring developments regarding the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We have held daily teleconferences with HQ staff and the Judge Specialist Moderator to assess the rapidly evolving information and its potential impacts on our regional competitions. On March 11, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) declared a global pandemic after a 13-fold increase in cases outside China in the past two weeks.

We have reviewed a great deal of data on the potential risk to our members created by COVID-19, and performed a risk assessment based on information provided by the Government of Canada Public Health Authority (You may review this risk assessment tool [here](#)). As a result of how rapidly the situation has changed and the global pandemic declaration, the International Board of Directors held an emergency call to discuss regional competitions and how best to proceed. The call's agenda not only included discussion of our primary duty of care to our members, but also legal and financial considerations driven by COVID-19. **After much discussion, the extremely difficult decision has been made to cancel all regional competitions for 2020.**

We know this will come as an enormous disappointment to many of you and it is not a decision we took lightly. **Our primary concern is your health and safety.**

The difficult decision to cancel our regional competitions was made based upon the responsibility and care we feel for our Sweet Adelines family and for our global community. With wide-spread recommendations to avoid large gatherings to inhibit the spread of the COVID-19 virus, cancelling our beloved regionals is a way that Sweet Adelines can contribute to the health of the world...that is, until we can share our harmonies again.

Our rationale for cancelling the regional competitions

The U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) Director Robert Redfield told a congressional committee the virus has spread to at least 38 states. "Right now the epicenter - the new China - is Europe," Redfield said. "And there's a lot of people coming back and forth from Europe that are now starting to seed these communities." Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and a member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, told the committee that there will be greater spread of the virus in the U.S. in the coming months.

The U.K.'s chief medical officers raised the risk to the U.K. from low to moderate. On February 27, the prime minister of Australia stated, "we believe that the risk of a global pandemic is very much upon us." German Chancellor Angela Merkel warned that up to 70% of the country's population could contract the virus. The Swedish Public Health Agency upgraded Sweden's risk of COVID-19 spreading from "moderate" to "very high."

Cancelling only the first several weekends of regional competitions was discussed as an option. However, after reviewing information on the expansion of the virus in regions around the world, the decision was made to move forward with cancelling all regional competitions.

Our contingency competition plan

To ensure that our members still have the opportunity to compete this year, **a contingency competition plan has been developed for 2020. The plan allows for placements at the regional level and provides a path to qualify for the international competition through the submission of video performances.** The details of the contingency plan are being finalized and will be released very soon.

Next steps

We know you have many questions and we have compiled a preliminary list of [FAQs](#) to address your concerns. As we gather additional information, the FAQs will be updated. In the interest of time and the rapidly evolving nature of the situation, we felt it imperative to update our members as quickly as possible.

We thank you for your patience and understanding as we have worked diligently to gather information to understand the situation and make the most informed decision possible. The spirit of Sweet Adelines is strong and will see us through this difficult time. Please monitor your email for further information about the contingency competition plans and for additional FAQs.

With appreciation and in harmony,

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