



Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC.®

March 19, 2020
Philadelphia, PA

Dear SIA Members in the United States and Canada,

Thank you for your continued outreach for guidance during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Last Thursday, March 12, I wrote you: **In view of the seriousness and risks associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) infection—if you are in North America, Japan and Korea, you must postpone or cancel all club events through at least April 15.** You should reassess this timing based on your local health and governmental authorities' recommendations.

In the United States, Sunday night, March 15, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reassessed this timing for us. The CDC recommends organizers postpone or cancel events of 50 or more people for the next eight weeks (estimated through May 11). The CDC defines gatherings as conferences, festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, weddings and other types of assemblies.

U.S. President Trump is calling for all gatherings of 10 or more to cease. Some areas of the U.S. are moving to sheltering in place. In fact, any organization involved in delivering its services through public gatherings are suspending operations.

Because of these health and government recommendations, this communication supersedes my March 12 communication. April 15 is now May 11 until further notice.

However, given today's latest information from our U.S. public health officials, I would plan an additional three weeks for good measure ... so June 1.

Here are some important points to be aware of:

- If you are with a club located in the US or Canada, our club and region liability coverage does not cover communicable diseases. Holding an event of any size given the current circumstances will be considered negligent, placing great risk upon the club, its members, the region and SIA headquarters (SIAHQ). You must postpone or cancel all club events at least through May 11th; June 1st for good measure.
- Your region leadership has received guidance from our General Legal Counsel regarding written agreements for region events and the use of "force majeure." If your club is having challenges canceling or postponing an event due to the venue, contact your region leadership for assistance and guidance prior to investing in legal representation regarding your club contracts.
- Currently 20 of our 29 regions have canceled their region conferences and have been able to do so with the cooperation of their venue.
- Region leadership have received virtual options for sharing important information covered in their planned region conference.
- The timing of the 46th Biennial Convention in Bellevue, WA, is being evaluated. The health and safety of all our convention attendees is our highest priority. Please keep checking the [convention webpage](#) for the most recent updates.
- SIAHQ employees have been outfitted to work remotely until further notice. While the situation continues to evolve, you can count on the fact we will continue to do our very best to support you during this time.

We encourage you to continue to educate yourself on the facts using recognized experts such as Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, and local and national governmental official requirements.

We encourage you to take precautions with social distancing and good hygiene.

We encourage you to create new ways to communicate with your club members, your community, and your supporters. It is imperative our mission continues, and our

communities and supporters know our Dream Programs will continue to provide the services they have come to expect and treasure.

We encourage you to rethink your club year in 2020—use this time to take planned activities in April, May and June and move them further out to a time when it becomes apparent group gatherings are allowed in our respective areas.

We are grateful for your continued demonstration of professionalism, dedication, and compassion as we work through these challenges together.

Continued best wishes to you, your families, and your communities for good health and resilience in the weeks to come.

With care and concern for you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Lucas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elizabeth M. Lucas
Executive Director & CEO
Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.