



March 13, 2020

Regrettably, the 2020 Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting is canceled due to COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 outbreak has reached pandemic proportions with no signs of abating soon. The leadership of the Society, together with the executive director have been monitoring the development of the outbreak consistently and have followed closely the recommendations and declarations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO), including the COVID-19 global pandemic as declared by WHO on March 11, 2020. We are also taking into account the directives by local health departments and the many travel restrictions placed by institutions on our attendees.

After weighing all these factors, as well as our responsibilities to our attendees, the community of San Francisco and the many local communities attendees will return to, we have determined that it is not possible to conduct our Annual Meeting in San Francisco and have therefore made the extremely difficult, but needed decision, to cancel the meeting. We have not taken this decision lightly, since the annual meeting is for many the highlight of the year. However, the rapidly escalating situation and our responsibility to protect the health of our members compels us to act. If you registered for this year's Annual Meeting, your registration will be cancelled and refunded in full in the coming weeks. If you made a hotel reservation, you must contact the hotel directly at least 72 hours prior to check-in in order to avoid fees.

I recognize deeply the efforts required to organize a conference of this magnitude and complexity, including the amount of time, creativity, organizational talent and perseverance. There are so many people to recognize, but I'm particularly grateful to the program committee led by L. Alison Phillips, PhD, the local arrangements committee, guided by Catherine Benedict, PhD, and the many professionals led by Rachel Mizar, Lindsay Bullock and Tara Withington from EDI.

This year's program was extraordinary, and we are exploring options to share with you the highlights of the program. For the moment, we will disseminate any news through our regular communication channels, via our website, Twitter and our LinkedIn page. We also look forward to publishing this year's abstract supplement as scheduled in *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*.

The Annual Meeting has always been my favorite professional event of the year and it really pains me to write this note to you. I am consoled however by knowing that our SBM is resilient and that we will convene next year in Orlando, FL, stronger than ever. In the meantime, stay healthy, happy and creative.

Michael A. Diefenbach, PhD
SBM President