



SOCIETY OF BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Potential Aid for Industries Impacted by Coronavirus

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy and Schumer:

I write regarding prospective federal intervention to support the airline, travel and other targeted industries impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. **The Society of Behavioral Medicine urges you to also include associations, nonprofits and other tax-exempt organizations within any federal aid packages or supplemental appropriations measures**, as many have been and will be harmed by event cancellations and reduced meeting attendance as a result of COVID-19. The devastation to professional societies will impact science and public health, because these are the forums where the latest research is presented and debated. Now is the time more than ever to protect science.

According to the Events Industry Council's 2018 Economic Significant Study conducted by Oxford Economics¹, more than 1.9 million meetings occur in the United States each year – with more than 250 million attendees. These meetings contribute more than \$446 billion to U.S. gross domestic product and directly support 5.9 million jobs nationwide.

As you are no doubt aware, the fast-spreading COVID-19 epidemic has prompted the cancellation of dozens of major meetings and events in the U.S. and forced other event sponsors to consider cancelling or postponing innumerable other events dependent on in-person attendance at convention centers, hotels and other event facilities. Many of these meetings and

¹ Events Industry Council. Economic Significance of Meetings to the US Economy. February 2018. <https://dev-meetingsmeanbusiness.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/Economic%20Significance%20of%20Meetings%20to%20the%20US%20Economy.pdf>



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events also attract international participants, who generate 11.5 percent (about \$38 billion) of direct spending during their visits to the U.S. International travel to the U.S. has dropped sharply during the COVID-19 outbreak and signs point to this trend growing until the virus is brought under control. The U.S. Travel Association forecasts international flights to the U.S. will plummet six percent over the next three months alone, which would be the largest decline since the 2008 economic crisis.

Additionally, many associations operate similarly to small businesses and are greatly impacted if employees are forced to take sick leave or are quarantined as a result of COVID-19 interaction. We are aware the Trump Administration and Congress are considering measures for small businesses that may require cash flow assistance amid the outbreak, and **urge that tax-exempt entities be included in any temporary aid designed to stem the economic fallout resulting from COVID-19.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Society for Behavioral Medicine

CC:

The Honorable Richard Neal, Chairman
United States House of Representatives Committee on Ways & Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin Brady, Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives Committee on Ways & Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Finance



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219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey, Chairwoman
United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby, Chair
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510