



March 19, 2020

### **Message from ASWIS Leadership on COVID-19 Impact**

ASWIS Colleagues:

As the ASWIS Executive Committee continues to monitor and traverse the rapidly changing impact of COVID-19, we want to pay homage to all those impacted across the globe. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of humanity as we work collaboratively to provide comfort to those impacted and support those working to protect our future. As we all give thought to how we can best impact our communities, at minimum, we can all follow the recommendations of the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). We can also promote community mental health using recommendation from the [National Alliance on Mental Health](#).

While our primary focus must remain the public health of all, our Executive Committee recognizes the direct impact of COVID-19 on the world of sports. This impact is historical, far-reaching, and leading to uncharted territories. When you reach uncharted territories, you are required to make extremely difficult decisions. These decisions undoubtedly impacted the lives of millions of athletes, coaches, industry leaders, and fans. Our Executive Committee applauds the actions of all sport organizations in their efforts to protect the safety of their athletes and beyond. This includes decisions made by professional sports organizations, college sport governing bodies, high school athletic associations, youth sport organizations, and recreational leagues.

Our Alliance must now join the interprofessional efforts to help those in the athletic space impacted by COVID-19. This could include helping through direct-service interventions, educational outreach, policy advocacy, and research. A few targeted areas for ASWIS members to consider include:

- **Telehealth and Remote Communications:** We have over 50 clinically licensed and several dozen licensed social workers in our membership. Please give thought to how you might be able to best impact those in your community through telehealth practices. To learn more about specific guidelines related to telehealth and COVID-19 visit the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#).
- **Development of Educational Materials:** In the world of instantaneous decision-making, we must consistently remember the short- and long-term impacts our decisions have on others. This includes impacts across the sport spectrum from those in the professional space and community leagues to spectators. We must also provide guidance on how best to communicate and process such major decisions with all in the athletic community. Such resources can help safeguard individual, family, and community well-being. We strongly encourage all of our committees to work on the creation of such resources.



- **Policy Advocacy:** There will be new sport-based policies as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. While many of these policies are still unknown, we must follow new developments and share our voice at appropriate times. For instance, our Executive Committee made known our willingness to help several of the largest sport-governing bodies in the world. This includes the willingness to serve on committees, task forces, think tanks, etc. We can also share thoughts and ideas through official position statements and policy platforms.
- **Research:** A common goal in worldwide crisis is to learn new approaches and strategies to prepare for the future. Research provides one avenue for helping to learn more about the overall impact of COVID-19 in sports. There is a gamut of possibilities for our members in academia or in student roles to consider. If you are interested in research efforts please email [socialworkinsports@gmail.com](mailto:socialworkinsports@gmail.com).
- **Share Your Experiences:** Chances are most of our membership are having parts of their athletic identity impacted by COVID-19. Whether this is in your own sport career, being a sport parent, or being an avid fan, our lives are not the same as they were just a few weeks ago. We can create solidarity by speaking openly about these impacts and inviting the world to share their stories too. This can be done through active blogging and social media campaigns.

We will out battle COVID-19. We will see brighter days ahead. We will do this together. In the interim, let us also not forget to cherish the loved ones in our lives. These loved ones need us. Also, please make sure you are taking care of yourselves.

Sincerely,

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