

To Medical Associations
organizing international
medical congresses in 2020

Basel, April 2020

COVID-19:

Aspects to consider regarding 2020 planned international medical congresses and industry involvement.

Hope you are well in this particular situation.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has changed the world of the healthcare congress environment completely and a lot of difficult decisions had to be taken by all parties involved and we understand there will be short, mid and long-term impacts from this.

In order to support the Industry stakeholders, namely Medical Associations and our Member Companies in this process, we at IPCAA would like to share with you some of the questions and challenges our Member Companies are facing and kindly ask that they are taken into consideration during your association discussions and decision making.

Topic	Challenge
Congress Postponement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If a congress is postponed to a later date the new date should not be too close to the next congress in 2021.- If the postponement also includes a change of destination / location some companies might need to re-assess their activities due to local compliance standards.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current uncertainty if the situation changes and improves to a point that live (and even virtual) congress attendance in 2020 is generally an option. - A postponement to Q3 or Q4 might compete with other congresses and HCPs cannot afford to be away from their practices too long.
Virtual Congress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is uncertainty on how the different Code of Ethics have to be applied for virtual congresses. Companies need guidance on the “host country” question. This point is currently clarified with the respective European and International Pharmaceutical Industry Federation. The outcome will have an impact especially on the feasibility of Virtual Industry Satellite symposia. - In addition, it is important to address the access to virtual events, as industry in general is under very strict rules about access to their educational information. - Like in live congress set-up, access control must be done by the Medical Association as the owner of the event. - A move from live to virtual congress set-up requires significant lead time to adapt content and delivery. - The focus should remain on the delegate’s learning experience and education similarly to a live congress.
Congress Cancellation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management and clarity about re-funding, financial obligations etc. would be appreciated. - Offering to credit paid funds towards future year meeting might create accounting issues for some Member Companies
Scientific Content & Access Control to virtual sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In all three scenarios (postponement, virtual and cancellation) a publication of the scientific content should be made available to HCPs (e.g. printed or virtual format) in order to secure education. Please consider access controls for virtual download is in place and be clear about duration of publication. - The more information you can share about your planned format, the sooner our Member Companies can give you their feedback.
Timing and Communication	Although it might be difficult, we recommend sharing information as soon as possible and taking decisions

	<p>at least 2 months prior to the planned congress as this helps all parties involved.</p> <p>We acknowledge that the COVID-19 outbreak has posed a major challenge on the organizers of medical congresses. Industry aims to maintain the partnerships with Medical Associations and a clear communication helps to do so. Even if it is just a short update that you need more time is already of help. Feel free to send those to our Secretariat for further distribution to our Member Companies.</p>
<p>Anything else?</p>	<p>How can we support and clarify?</p> <p>For all parties this is a new situation and we would to approach this in a collaborative approach ensuring all parties understand the challenges and needs moving forward.</p>

Whilst we need to address and clarify some short-term topics we should as well look at more mid and long-term questions to ensure sustainability of medical congresses and keep in mind that the congresses' audience are the HCPs who are the most affected right now trying to work around the clock saving lives.

We hope you find these initial points helpful - please do not hesitate to reach out to us via e-mail for more details or with any questions you might have. We are very happy to discuss this further with you.

With kind regards,

IPCAA