



**GREATER BOSTON
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

April 7, 2020

COVID-19 INDUSTRY UPDATE

Good afternoon,

We were delighted to see the outpouring of support for our [#LoveFromBoston](#) campaign that kicked off on Saturday, April 3. Led by the GBCVB, in collaboration with our hotel partners and our colleagues at City Hall, we asked hotels to illuminate messages of love and unity on their exteriors and dozens are now participating. A number of other prominent landmarks, such as the Zakim Bridge, TD Garden and City Hall, illuminated their facades in red to spotlight the cause on April 3 when it launched. We hope you saw these symbols emblazoned across the city. Follow our Instagram account – [@VisitBoston](#) – or the hashtag to see the amazing participation and the support for our healthcare professionals and all those who are most impacted by this crisis.

We are all impacted, of course, and so many organizations, particularly in travel and hospitality, have had to make very difficult decisions during this pandemic. Starting this week, the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau has furloughed some of our staff and cut remaining salaries, and hours, by 30%. We understand that many across our industry have had to make more drastic reductions. Please know that our staff is doing all we can right now to service our members and execute campaigns such as [#DineInBoston](#), [#VirtuallyBoston](#), and [#LoveFromBoston](#) to keep this destination and all of our partners engaged with consumers and poised for recovery. Due to our furlough and our reduced hours there may be times when we don't respond quite as quickly as you are accustomed to, but rest assured that a response will come as soon as it can.

On April 2 Mayor Walsh held a press conference and announced several initiatives that will be important for our industry. The Mayor shared two new resources that will help small businesses during the public health crisis. Drawing on support from City, federal and private entities, the City of Boston has created

a [Small Business Relief Fund](#) that will establish and administer \$2 million in grant funding for local businesses at risk of permanent closure due to COVID-19. Small businesses can begin applying now. The City of Boston has also created a [Financial Relief Handbook](#) and [FAQ document](#) for small businesses. These resources will help businesses navigate both public and private capital programs.

Governor Baker, during his daily press briefing yesterday, announced a \$13 million coronavirus [relief fund](#) that will support front line workers and at-risk populations facing homelessness or food insecurity. We applaud our elected leaders for helping all segments to weather this storm.

As difficult decisions and unique partnerships emerge during this crisis, we wanted to share some information regarding collaborative efforts. We continue to grow our [dedicated webpage](#) that compiles special offers at hotels specifically for healthcare professionals. A group of Boston nurses and healthcare professionals called **“*Scrubs in the Outfield*”** has come together to assist front line workers obtain the essentials they need to stay safe. One essential item that's now in short supply are the scrub caps these workers use in certain areas of specialty – such as the OR – to ensure sterility and protect against virus transmission. Shower caps can roughly approximate the role that scrub caps play so *Scrubs in the Outfield* is asking greater Boston hotels, or any organizations that may have access to shower caps, to please donate them. To learn more or to donate please reach out to them at scrubsintheoutfield@gmail.com.

I'd also like to bring your attention to the [B Strong Fund](#) spearheaded by Big Night Entertainment. The fund raises money for over 1,000 service industry employees in the Big Night family who have lost their job since March 15. Please share with us any similar funds that have been created for employees in the services industry. In addition, Big Night is also offering protective cloth masks that can be purchased at bignightshop.com with all proceeds going to the Fund. We've heard from a few hotels asking about where to get more masks and we'd encourage you to visit the Big Night site where you can purchase bulk orders.

The restaurant sector, like others, is acutely susceptible to the fallout from this crisis. There was an [article in Boston Globe](#) over the weekend that delved into the layers of complexity that recovery will look like for restaurants in particular. For restaurants, this existential threat is not confined to the length of the pandemic, it extends well beyond that period as the psychological recovery of patrons – and their desire to congregate in both vast and intimate social spaces – will be tested for months beyond the last patient being cured.

This is really a broader picture. We are keenly aware that after the COVID-19 earthquake a series of aftershocks will continue to shake consumer confidence. We are preparing a multi-tiered, integrated recovery plan that will involve dozens of touchpoints and deployment vehicles. We will convene a task force to analyze the full picture of how the pandemic has ravaged our industry, and to devise and execute destination marketing strategies.

Let's get through this week, which will surely be difficult, and hope that a timeline for greener pastures starts coming into view. Then we can talk more about recovery. We stand ready to lead this conversation. We are here for you.

Martha