



**GREATER BOSTON
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

COVID-19 UPDATE

March 11, 2020

The Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (GBCVB) is working diligently to gather **all pertinent information** related to the **coronavirus situation** (see: [Johns Hopkins map](#)) and how it is impacting our industry. Governor Baker yesterday declared a [State of Emergency](#) to bolster the Commonwealth's response to this crisis. In concert with the MCCA, we are tracking lost convention center business, and we have also **surveyed our hotel partners** to report on **lost room revenue** unrelated to a citywide event. It should come as no surprise that **the numbers are staggering**. RevPAR projections for the United States in 2020 were already flat prior to the coronavirus outbreak, and now Destinations International projects RevPAR to **decrease by 11.6% in 2020**.

This week's news – including the **cancellation of major trade shows** like IMEX and DNE and **large conferences in Boston** such as the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, National Science Teacher Association National Conference, and the American Occupational Therapy Association – sends shockwaves through the meetings and hospitality sector. Thus far, **two dozen events** that were set to occur at the Hynes or BCEC have been cancelled, postponed or moved to a virtual setting.

We understand how difficult it must have been for Mayor Walsh to call off an iconic event like the **St. Patrick's Day Parade** and we commend the responsibility he shouldered in making that tough decision. We are in close communication with City Hall as it relates to COVID-19 and how big events may be affected.

We congratulate the MCCA on the **safe and successful hosting** of the [Mizuno Boston Volleyball Festival](#) at the BCEC last weekend. By all accounts, this was an exemplary case of partners working together to ensure that communication channels and public safety protocols were in place; the athletes and spectators enjoyed a great experience.

We continue to work with Massport, the U.S. Travel Association, Tourism Economics, and the CDC to **develop educational campaigns and up-to-date messaging** for our joint constituencies.

Several of our partners have created dedicated webpages to educate and update their various audiences. The **City of Boston** has [developed a list of common questions](#) related to coronavirus, and the **Commonwealth of Massachusetts** has [created a landing page](#) to share information and best practices. This week the **MCCA** rolled out a [dedicated blog and webpage](#) to keep their clients and the public abreast of any news. And the **Boston Public Health Commission** is constantly [updating its blog](#) to reflect real-time developments.

DINE OUT BOSTON EXTENDED

The GBCVB will do whatever we can to help mitigate the effect of lost business this month and beyond. As such, we have extended [Dine Out Boston](#) an extra week – now **through March 20** – which will cover the date range when the Seafood Expo would have been here.

If you are running any special deals please send them to [Glenn McGibbon](#) and we will promote on our website and through social channels and dedicated campaigns.

U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION TOOLKIT

Please review the U.S. Travel [emergency response toolkit](#) that includes:

- [Facts and talking points for industry use with travelers](#)
- [Media holding statement and talking points](#)
- [Guidance for healthy travel habits from the CDC](#)
- [Sharable graphics from World Health Organization](#)

EAST | WEST MARKETING GROUP

Our partner agency in China, East | West Marketing Group, is sharing [weekly updates](#) with the GBCVB and we will distribute this report to our members every Monday. This update also lives on our homepage.

AIR SERVICE

Major US carriers have **suspended service** to and from China through the end of April. **Hainan Airlines** suspended flights from mainland China to Boston in early

February. **Korean Air** suspended flights from Seoul on March 8. **Alitalia** is still flying its Rome-Boston route but has made reductions in service during March; Alitalia plans to go to daily service starting April 15. **Cathay Pacific** has reduced their daily service from Hong Kong to 3X/week. The anticipated March 29 launch of **Vienna-Boston** service with Austrian Airlines has been pushed back to June 2. **JAL service** from Tokyo has **not been impacted**.

BUSINESS IMPACT

We have heard from several industry partners expressing concern over **lost business and the uncertainty** surrounding major events, conferences and meetings scheduled to occur in Boston and Cambridge in 2020. We invite you to **please [share with us](#)** any examples of lost business – including room nights lost, dates, and industry sector impacted – so that we can track the impact of COVID-19 and collectively understand its effect. We encourage all of our partners – restaurants, retailers, museums and attractions, et al. – to share information with us. This week we distributed a **Survey Monkey to hotel partners** to gather data on lost room revenue. Dozens of hotel partners have responded. We of course understand that this information is proprietary, and we will not share hotel-specific information with any outside parties.

INSURANCE POLICIES

While we hope that the coronavirus situation is contained in short order, we would encourage all GBCVB members to **review insurance policies** and be prepared for lost business and cancellations.