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PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

MEMO

To: Program Training Directors, Commission on Accreditation Site Visitors,
Commissioners and Accreditation Constituents

From: The Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation

Date: March 12, 2020

RE: Response to COVID-19 outbreak

The APA Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation (OPCA) has received calls wanting to know about compliance with accreditation policies and procedures in light of the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Since there are confirmed cases in a number of states in the USA, and a number of colleges and universities have gone to virtual instruction to slow the spread of the virus, programs are asking questions about modifying their policies and procedures to minimize exposure to COVID-19. Also, individuals are asking about travel to conduct site visits or to attend Commission on Accreditation (CoA) trainings and scheduled meetings. Furthermore, education and training programs are asking about how to modify their instructional delivery and/or clinical service procedures as a consequence of this health concern.

We understand the growing concern about the coronavirus (COVID-19) and how the COVID-19 outbreak may affect constituents of the APA Commission on Accreditation (CoA), including faculty, staff, students and trainees at accredited programs, CoA site visitors, CoA Commissioners, CoA program review consultants and APA liaisons to the CoA. We want to assure you that your health and wellbeing are top priority of the CoA and the APA. The OPCA is working with the CoA to monitor this situation and the following information is provided as guidance for academic programs and site visitors.

Academic programs: Programs are advised to follow the guidance offered by their institutional administration, as well as that from the [World Health Organization](#), the [US Center for Disease Control](#) and the state and local health departments in the program's location in regard to maintaining operations in a manner that reduces risk of exposure to the virus. In addition, the office of post-secondary education of the US Department of Education has provided [guidance](#) that allows educational program's flexibility in the methods by which students may continue to be served.

The CoA supports programs in its efforts to determine the best ways for students and trainees to successfully develop knowledge and competencies in accord with program requirements. Telesupervision, telepractice and distance education delivery are not prohibited, and CoA recognizes that expansion of these methods temporarily during this unprecedented time may be necessary. Requirements for the use of these three distance

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methods, when implemented as a regular educational delivery method are described in the CoA [Implementing Regulations](#) for the Standards of Accreditation. If in-person coursework or clinical practice experiences are disrupted, flexibility in the use of these distance practices as part of a program's plan to minimize COVID-19 exposure is appropriate.

Programs are advised to consider external regulatory requirements when making changes to their delivery structure during this time. It may be helpful to consult with other regulatory agencies including institutional accreditors and licensure agencies when modifying activities involving students and trainees and their delivery of services.

For Site Visits: To minimize exposure risk, site visits scheduled between March 12, 2020 and April 30, 2020 have been postponed. The CoA will review the situation in mid-April to determine if this postponement will be continued. Site visitors are asked to postpone scheduling additional flights for visits scheduled following the April 30 date until this reassessment can occur. When a date has been decided to begin scheduling site visits again, the OPCA will work with programs and site visitors to reschedule the visit. Program directors and members of the site visit team should contact the OPCA if there are questions surrounding this matter.

Site visitors are also asked to cancel travel arrangements that they have made for the visits that have been postponed. Instructions to do so follow.

If hotel reservations were made, please cancel them by contacting the hotel. For air travel, if the:

FLIGHT WAS BOOKED THROUGH DEEM, THE ONLINE BOOKING TOOL: If you booked through Deem you should cancel your reservation in Deem. You will be able to see and reuse your unused ticket the next time you travel for APA within a year from the original ticket date. Please contact your staff liaison if you do not have any future travel for APA occurring within this timeframe.

FLIGHT BOOKED THROUGH AN AGENT AT ATC, APA'S TRAVEL AGENCY: If you booked with an ATC agent either by phone or email, it is best to go to your airline carrier's website and cancel your flight online. You can use your unused ticket the next time you travel for APA within a year from the original ticket date. Please contact your staff liaison if you do not have any future travel for APA occurring within this timeframe. If necessary, you can contact ATC at reservations@atcmeetings.com and ask them to cancel your reservation. If you need to speak with an agent at ATC, call (703) 720-9008 or (800) 458-9383

FLIGHT BOOKED DIRECTLY WITH AN AIRLINE: You will need to contact your airline directly. It is best to go to your carrier's website and cancel online. ATC or APA cannot assist with cancelling reservations that were booked directly with an airline. You can use your unused ticket the next time you travel for APA within a year from the original

ticket date. Please contact your staff liaison if you do not have any future travel for APA occurring within this timeframe.

ANY QUESTIONS? Please contact the OPCA at apasitevisit@apa.org

Remaining vigilant in preventing the spread of communicable illnesses — including the coronavirus, the flu, and the common cold — is critical. Protect yourself and others through daily preventative actions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

If you have any questions, please email the OPCA at apaaccred@apa.org.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline Remondet Wall".

Jacqueline Remondet Wall, PhD
Director, Office of Program Consultation and Education