



Dear AVA Club Presidents and Officers,

At the March 17, 2020, Electronic Board Meeting the AVA Board of Directors unanimously agreed to immediately suspend all AVA Traditional events through April 30th, 2020, due to COVID-19. In addition, the Board recommended that all club related events to include group walks, meetings, social gatherings, etc. be postponed through April 30th, 2020.

As the Nation begins looking to a return to normal, at the Electronic Board Meeting on April 21, 2020, the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to rescind this suspension effective May 1, 2020 with stipulations. Based on the recommendations of the National Coronavirus Recovery Commission, the Board sees the return to normal AVA activities to be approved on a Regional basis. Each Regional Director will advise their Region when they are prepared to begin approving sanction requests. However, clubs should recognize that even within Regions there may be different timelines with regard to returning to some form of business as usual. Clubs should listen to and follow the directions of State, Local and Federal authorities on local circumstances surrounding rules and guidelines for returning to normal as we continue to battle the COVID-19 virus. We expect that social distancing, wearing of masks and gloves, and limitations on the size of gatherings will continue on a regional, state, and local level. Regional Directors will be asking clubs if they are following those guidelines as they look to approve sanction requests.

While this has been a very disruptive time in the life of our clubs and AVA, as we return to some form of "normal," this may present us with an excellent opportunity to make a positive impact on our communities. There is every indication that COVID-19 has caused many people to seek ways to improve the quality of their health. Clubs should look at this as an opportunity for attracting new participants as we know the mental and physical benefits of walking, biking, and swimming are just what people need.

The Board had previously determined that Traditional events that were rescheduled during the 2020 calendar year would not require an additional sanctioning fee. We recommend that all clubs try and reschedule postponed Traditional events, already sanctioned and paid for, within this calendar year. There is no waiver of a processing fee for YRE and Seasonal events because the processing fees make up fifty percent of the forty-dollar (\$40) sanction fee. The National Office will delay billing of the processing fees (sanction fees) for YRE's and Seasonals if requested. Please contact Marian at the National Office should you have any concerns.

If a Traditional event was CANCELLED or cannot be rescheduled for whatever reason, clubs should submit a request to their RD indicating why they could not reschedule the event this year or why it was cancelled. The RD will present this to the National Office who would make the call whether or not to grant a credit for a 2021 sanctioned Traditional event. Just to be clear the National Office is giving a credit for Traditional events already sanctioned and paid for but did not happen in 2020.





**AMERICA'S
WALKING CLUB**
— ESTABLISHED 1976 —

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In addition, there is some discussion over asking sponsors of Special Programs to extend their end of program dates by 6 months to allow participants time to make up for missed opportunities to participate in qualifying events. A decision on this will be made at the next Electronic Board Meeting on May 19.

COVID-19 has had a significant adverse impact on the budget of AVA as it has with so many small and large businesses. We have taken and will continue to take actions to keep AVA afloat. An example of this was the cancellation of the in-person Board Meeting that was to have been held in July which will save AVA \$10,000. In place of that in-person meeting will be an extend Electronic Board Meeting. Another example was the decision to close the National Office on Fridays to cut back on personnel expenses. In addition to cost-saving efforts, the National Office has taken action to apply for various grants and forgivable loan programs for which AVA may be eligible. All of this is to ensure that you know that at the national level we are doing everything we can to weather the COVID-19 storm. You can help by contributing to The Big Give which is on-going until September.

It is important that we continue to take action to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Your club members are the most valuable part of AVA: America's Walking Club and many are in one of the very vulnerable populations for COVID-19. It is critical that we do what we can to keep everyone healthy.

Stay Safe and Healthy So You Can Keep Walking.
David Bonewitz, PhD
President

