May 13, 2020

To the Special Olympics Kansas Community:

Special Olympics Kansas staff takes the threat of COVID-19 very seriously. Our number one priority throughout this pandemic has been keeping our athletes and SOKS community safe and healthy. That priority will remain our focus as we continue to make future decisions.

In our last communication, we indicated the need to cancel Summer Games and cancel all activities through May 15.

Based on new guidance from Special Olympics, Inc., the suspension of all sports training (including team practices), competitions and all other program-related activities involving athletes is being extended through June 30, 2020. This includes any function involving our athletes due to data showing an elevated risk for people with intellectual disabilities developing serious illness if they contract COVID-19.

We have also made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Spikes and Strikes volleyball and bowling tournament. This decision was made in collaboration with coaches as a proactive approach to keeping athletes safe even after state stay at home orders are completely lifted.

The decision has also been made to reschedule the Summer Program Conference in Salina from summer to November 13-14, 2020. More information about the conference will be available in the fall.

At this time no decisions have been made regarding the fall sports softball, golf, flag football, bocce and soccer.

One bright light in this time of uncertainty has been the focus on health and wellness programs. We have continued to provide Healthy Athlete programming through virtual initiatives and will continue to do so. Please follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/specialolympicskansas to take part in virtual workouts, learn how to make healthy snacks, and more.

We have also launched a first-of-its-kind event: The 2020 Virtual Summer Games. We encourage all athletes to participate at home. Information about this program can be found at ksso.org/virtual-summer-games.

While we know this is a time of uncertainty we want you to know that we are here to support you. We will all get through this together. Based on great feedback from coaches, we are working on a video to educate athletes and teams about social distancing and best practices for when we are able to reopen on or after July 1.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us.

Be well,

John Lair
Special Olympics Kansas President/CEO

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