



March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
1705 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leaders McConnell and Hoyer, and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

On behalf of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR) and the American Association for Dental Research (AADR), which represent more than 10,000 individual and over 100 institutional members worldwide, I am writing to ask that associations, including non-profit groups and other tax-exempt associations, be included in any federal legislation supporting industries impacted by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic.

IADR and AADR, both Section 501(c)(3) organizations based in Alexandria, Virginia, along with our Canadian Division, recently canceled our joint IADR/AADR/CADR General Session & Exhibition scheduled for March 18-21, 2020 in Washington, D.C., due to health concerns for our participants and the D.C. community over the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak. The General Session was slated to bring more than 5,000 delegates to Washington, D.C. from both the United States and abroad to participate in the meeting—the leading scientific conference for dental, oral and craniofacial research. This annual meeting is an essential funding stream that allows IADR and AADR to maintain our operations.

As you are undoubtedly aware, our associations are not alone; the COVID-19 epidemic has forced the cancelation of dozens of major meetings and events around the country. Professional associations rely on revenue from their annual meetings to support and finance their operations throughout the rest of the year; revenue from an annual meeting may represent up to 50% or more of an association's annual revenue. Our own meeting cancelation will result in nearly \$3 million in lost revenue.

Many of the associations that canceled their meetings in March and April chose to act in the interest of community public health over their own financial stability. The associations that made the decision to cancel—and in so doing prevented the further spread of COVID-19—should not be penalized for acting for the greater public good. We have seen the negative consequences for both participants and surrounding communities of meetings that were not canceled during the same time period.

+1.703.548.0066  
+1.703.548.1883  
1619 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-3406, USA  
[www.iadr.org](http://www.iadr.org) • [www.aadr.org](http://www.aadr.org)

Therefore, as Congress determines the best ways to support various industries with relief, IADR and AADR encourage lawmakers to:

- Make direct funding available to non-profit and tax-exempt associations that canceled meetings.
- Include a condition that hotels, as part of their economic relief, must waive the cancellation fees for non-profit and tax-exempt associations that canceled their meetings and events due to COVID-19.
- Ensure that relief or stimulus legislation makes tax credits and deductions applicable to the taxes non-profits pay, such as unrelated business income taxes and payroll taxes.

Associations play an integral role in our society—both from a public service and economic perspective. According to the Events Industry Council's 2018 Economic Significance of Meetings Study,<sup>1</sup> conducted by Oxford Economics, meetings convened by non-profit associations in the United States attract more than 250 million attendees, contribute nearly half a trillion dollars to U.S. gross domestic product and directly support 5.9 million jobs nationwide—many of which will be affected in the coming weeks. From a mission perspective, associations contribute to the betterment of our society by serving as resources for professionals and as links between research and public health professionals and state and federal policymakers. The meetings of scientific societies, such as those held by IADR and AADR, allow those working across research and public health to share knowledge and provide information and best practices that propel our nation forward; they help keep the United States at the forefront of science and innovation.

IADR and AADR greatly appreciate the work of Congress and the administration to support small businesses and industries affected by this epidemic, and we urge lawmakers to remember that non-profit associations promote and support a vibrant economy. It is our hope that as conversations surrounding federal intervention legislation continue, associations will be considered alongside the hotel industry, where our meetings take place, and the airline industry, which transports our participants to and from meetings.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have questions or if you need additional information, please contact me or IADR/AADR's Assistant Director of Government Affairs Lindsey Horan at 703.299.8098 or [lhoran@aadr.org](mailto:lhoran@aadr.org).

Sincerely,



Christopher H. Fox, DMD, DMSc  
Chief Executive Officer  
International Association for Dental Research  
American Association for Dental Research

Cc: House Appropriations Committee  
Senate Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Donald Beyer, Jr.

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<sup>1</sup> Events Industry Council. Economic Significance of Meetings to the U.S. Economy. February 2018. <https://dev-meetingsmeanbusiness.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/Economic%20Significance%20of%20Meetings%20to%20the%20US%20Economy.pdf>