



March 20, 2020

Community Update: Update on COVID-19 & HDSA Convention

Dear Friends of HDSA,

Thank you for your support and commitment to HDSA as we navigate this unforeseen public health event. We know that fighting Huntington's disease is overwhelming in the most normal circumstances, and certainly the COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis has augmented these challenges.

HDSA is committed to continuing the resources and support that you have come to expect from our nationwide network of Chapters, Affiliates, Social Workers and Support Groups. We encourage you to visit www.HDSA.org for more information about our online tools and virtual resources, as well as HDSA Community Updates regarding upcoming events and activities.

Unfortunately, our ability to host face-to-face meetings right now is greatly curtailed. Out of an abundance of caution and concern for our HD families, volunteers and staff, we have made the difficult decision to convert the **35th Annual HDSA Convention to a VIRTUAL event**. We will not be hosting a physical Convention in 2020.

For the first time in HDSA's history, we will be streaming our world-class presentations and much-anticipated research updates online, directly to your home – *FOR FREE!* The event will continue to take place in June, but the exact timing of Convention events is likely to change to accommodate a nationwide online audience.

The HDSA Convention has been described by many as a great "family reunion" – and to play our part in flattening the curve and controlling the spread of coronavirus – the HDSA staff will work tirelessly with our presenters to produce this milestone event featuring interactive workshops filled with all of the information, support and hope that you have come to expect at the HDSA Convention. In addition to the educational sessions and keynote speakers, we'll be integrating highlights from the more social events as well, including National Youth Alliance activities and Volunteer Awards.

Unfortunately, exercising social distancing means we will not be able to enjoy all the hugs that the HDSA Convention famously features, but we can save them for the 36th Annual HDSA Convention in 2021 in ... well, we can't give away all our secrets! **Follow us at [HDSA.org/convention](https://www.hdsa.org/convention) as we build out an incredible virtual program and reveal the location of the 36th Annual HDSA Convention in 2021!**

For those of you who had already made your travel plans for New Orleans this June, our team is committed to working with you to ensure you're refunded.

- **To receive your full registration refund**, please email Robert Coffey at rcoffey@hdsa.org.
- **If you booked your hotel through HDSA's room block**, your room will be canceled automatically by HDSA and the Sheraton. If you booked your room outside of HDSA's room block, you will need to contact the hotel directly to cancel your reservation by May 15th (though we suggest doing it sooner rather than later).
- **With few exceptions, the airline industry is honoring flight cancellations.** We encourage you to contact your carrier soon to request either a refund or a full credit.

Additionally, HDSA's Leadership Day, NYA Day and Professional Training for Social Workers will be converting to virtual events. If you were planning to participate in one of those events, stay tuned for more information from the appropriate HDSA team member.

Most importantly, we continue to follow the guidance of our friends at the Centers of Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO) and your state and local health departments and urge you to work with your personal clinician if you have any concerns regarding your personal risks for COVID-19.

If you have additional questions or concerns related to HDSA's work during this public health crisis, please contact your HDSA team member or write to us at info@hdsa.org. Thank you all for hard work and concern during this difficult time.

Please take care of one another, and be safe.

Sincerely,

Louise Vetter
President & CEO
Huntington's Disease Society of America