Risk Management Advisory Memo: COVID-19

Issue and Impact

- In December 2019, a viral pneumonia outbreak was first reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Authorities identified the outbreak as a novel (new) coronavirus, now named COVID-19. Although the vast majority of cases have been in China’s Hubei Province, there have been confirmed cases of COVID-19 in 30+ other countries, including the United States.
- Most governments and their public health officials have taken significant steps to prevent the spread of the virus by enforcing strict health screenings at airports, implementing entry requirements, and quarantining people who have been diagnosed with coronavirus. These measures differ by country and region.
- COVID-19 is an influenza-like illness. As with the flu, WorldStrides' Medical Director Dr. Neal Sikka advises that most people who get COVID-19 will only need rest and over-the-counter medications to recover fully. A few people will become very sick and need to go to a clinic or hospital to get better.
- Travelers most vulnerable to COVID-19 are older individuals and those with chronic health conditions.

Guidance from WorldStrides

- WorldStrides is closely monitoring this developing situation, carefully considering guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and US Department of State (DOS), as well as our security partners and medical director, Dr. Neal Sikka.
- WorldStrides has cancelled or relocated travel programs and study abroad in countries where COVID-19 has resulted in a CDC Level 3 Travel Notice, which discourages travel to that destination. Additionally, our organization is following the guidance of local health officials and avoiding any area where clusters of COVID-19 have been identified.
- WorldStrides encourages all travelers to review the CDC website for further information on COVID-19.
- To keep yourself and others safe and healthy, adhere to known, effective best practices to minimize your chance of catching respiratory infections:
  - Do not touch any part of your face without first washing your hands.
  - Avoid contact with persons who are already ill.
  - Avoid unnecessary touching of other persons (e.g. shaking hands in greeting) and limit touching publicly-shared surfaces, where possible.
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Carry hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol) and use it when hand washing might not be possible.
  - When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with a tissue or in your elbow.
  - If you fall into one of the higher risk categories (i.e., older or with chronic health conditions), speak with your physician to determine if traveling is right for you.
- Additionally, travelers should be prepared to arrive early and comply with screening procedures at airports.

*WorldStrides will continue to monitor the situation closely and update our guidance frequently.*

Note: The purpose of this advisory is to be a proactive tool, based on the best knowledge and recommendations of the WorldStrides Health and Safety team about a particular concern stated above. The goal of this document is to aid groups and institutions in determining the best course of action for the health and safety of all participants. Information is subject to change.