Due to recent developments tied to the global spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), including a case tied to a U.S. Special Olympics athlete, and the heightened risks for people with intellectual disabilities and the elderly, Special Olympics Tennessee is suspending all sport trainings, competitions, activities, and other activations involving our athletes across the state of Tennessee (such as Athlete Leadership, dances, or end of season parties) through March 31, 2020, at which time the situation will be reevaluated. This includes State Basketball, scheduled for March 13-14 at Lipscomb University. This decision was made carefully based on recommendations received from Special Olympics, Inc. after they consulted with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and reviewed the latest guidance from the World Health Organization.

State and local fundraising events and other events that do not include Special Olympics athletes may proceed in unaffected areas so long as the local Program organizers carefully assess the risk in collaboration with Special Olympics Tennessee and their local and state health agencies. For local Programs, fundraising events must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with the state office. Please share event details with Special Olympics Tennessee’s President/CEO, Adam Germek, agermek@specialolympicstn.org.

Because our school partners primarily manage Unified Champion School (UCS) events, we will work collaboratively with them to evaluate school-based UCS activities.

As this is a rapidly evolving situation, this guidance may be updated at any time. Staff and volunteers are asked and expected to use good judgment when determining if or how to proceed with activities, as not all possible situations or scenarios can be anticipated or covered by this guidance. However, in no case are volunteers or staff permitted to proceed with activities or events otherwise prohibited by this guidance.

While postponing/canceling events is disappointing for athletes who have trained for months to compete – as well as the volunteers, family, friends and our staff and board who look forward to cheering for them – we know that our love of sport doesn’t compare to the importance of protecting the health of the athletes, which will remain our priority. Questions will be asked as to whether we are able to reschedule these events and we simply don’t have enough information at this time to make that determination.

In order to keep a consistent state-wide message, please direct any media inquiries or related questions regarding coronavirus (COVID-19) to Adam Germek, 615-329-1375 or agermek@specialolympicstn.org.
Should you learn of anybody in your Special Olympics Program, who may have contracted the virus, please alert Adam Germek, 615-329-1375 or agermek@specialolympicstn.org.

Thank you for your patience as we navigate this constantly changing environment and strive to make the best possible decisions for the safety and well-being of our athletes and all constituents across the state.

Adam Germek
President and CEO - Special Olympics Tennessee