**SONE COVID-19 FAQ SHEET**

**Background**

1. **How was this protocol developed and who was consulted?**

In order to address the complexity of this issue and our global movement, Special Olympics International (SOI) set up a process that allowed for, and will continue to allow for, subject matter expert and stakeholder input, with the expectation that multiple iterations of this guidance may be required.

First, SOI gathered guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO), US Center for Disease Control (CDC), multiple governments, sport’s governing bodies, and other organizations. SOI also developed stakeholder input panels. Specifically, a COVID medical advisory working group was convened. Input was sought from Program CEOs, staff and athletes, legal, and risk management, human resources, programmatic leads (sport, health, youth/schools, leadership), Global Medical Advisory Committee, and Regional Presidents. In addition, we had review by World Athletics/IPC (International Paralympic Committee), CDC, USOPC (US Olympics and Paralympic Committee) and others.

**Phases and Timeline**

1. **What is the timeline for roll-out?**

Starting July 1, 2020, SONE began Phase 1, which means that all activities or team gatherings will consist of 10 or less participants. The SONE Board of Directors reviewed and approved the SONE Return to Play plan on 7/14/2020. Phase 2 (<50 participants) began on August 1st, 2020. The SONE guidance is intended as a minimum standard, not to replace any local regulations or guidance. If your local community has more stringent restrictions in place, local delegations must follow those. SONE will remain in each phase for a minimum of 2 weeks per SOI recommendations, even if local areas move through phases more quickly.

SONE will also refer to governmental guidance and revert to earlier phases if COVID-19 transmission increases. For example, if SONE were currently in Phase 1, but the local authorities determine that the community must resume “Stay at Home” orders, we will revert to Phase 0.

1. **Is there any further guidance for events between 50 people (Phase 2) and no size restrictions (Phase 3)?**

Additional guidance will be developed as needed. SONE will consider moving from Phase 2 to Phase 3 when a safe and effective Covid-19 vaccination is available to its participants and when local Covid-19 numbers are safe to do so.

**Responsibility, Liability, and Third-Party Events**

1. **Does this protocol apply to events hosted by a third party but at which SONE participants are invited to attend?**

If the event is hosted by a third party and SONE athletes or participants are being invited to attend, the third-party host organization should assume all responsibility. While SONE would defer to the rules and regulations of the third-party host, it is recommended that local delegations understand the safety and health measures the host will be implementing in order to help participants determine if they would feel safe attending.

The possibility of high-risk conditions in populations within the Special Olympics movement should be conveyed to leaders/authorities.

Participants, parents, guardians and caregivers should be provided with education on SONE guidelines and relevant acknowledgements or expectations of participants by the hosting party.

1. **In Phase 1 and Phase 2 , does the number restriction include any non-Special Olympics staff may be running/employees of the venue/facility, or other members of the public at the same venue who are not part of our Special Olympics group, or just the Special Olympics participants?**

If venue staff will not be interacting with the athletes and are not consistently within 6 feet/2 meters of the Special Olympics group, these facility staff would not count against your 10 or 50 or less limit. If the facility staff are mixing with the group and within 6 feet/2 meters during the activity and/or will be leading activities, then they should be counted in the number of participants.

In addition to SONE guidance, of course, delegations will have to follow the guidance of the venue/facility (as well as the local authorities) if more stringent in terms of number of participants allowed within the venue/facility overall for Phase 1 and 2. If there are other groups in the space, it is the responsibility of the venue to follow local guidance to control and applicable venue capacity limits and/or physical distancing requirements amongst groups in the venue. However, if the venue is not operating in a safe manner, or in conjunction with the general infection control precautions, the Program should consider switching venue or ceasing activities, until they can be done safely.

**COVID-19 Participant Code and Conduct and Risk Assessment Form**

1. **Who should complete the COVID-19 Participant Code of Conduct and Risk Assessment form?**

All SONE athletes, unified partners, and volunteers should complete the Covid-19 Participant code of Conduct and Risk Assessment form prior to returning to play.

1. **As a Head of Delegation (HOD), what should I do with the completed COVID-19 Participant Code of Conduct and Risk Assessment forms for my team?**

All completed and signed forms should be sent to Taylor Wolf, Program Support Manager, with SONE at twolf@sone.org or 9427 F Street, Omaha, NE 68127.

1. **What happens if someone refuses to sign the *COVID-19 Participant Code of Conduct and Risk Assessment* form?**

The main focus should be on the education and emphasizing that we are keeping everyone safe and strongly encouraging signing of the document. The Code of Conduct is not a legally binding document. If a person refuses to sign the document, please contact Nate Parks with SONE

1. **Can people fill out the code of conduct/risk form online instead of paper?**

Yes, this form is available at [www.sone.org](http://www.sone.org) on the return to play page in a fillable PDF.

**COVID-19 Screening**

1. **For the screening form, when asking if you have had any exposure to COVID-19, how immediate should the contact / exposure be/have been?**

Only report if the participant has had direct contact with someone who has had COVID-19, not that someone has been in contact with a friend who had another friend that had COVID-19.

1. **Is it required to do thermometer screenings onsite?**

Standard of care and medical authorities recommend that, in Phases 1 and 2, temperature checks should be done onsite for any in-person activities to supplement the questionnaire portion of the screening. At this time, **SONE is requiring** that temperature checks be done on site as participants and volunteers arrive at an event, gathering, or practice. Additionally, be sure you have provided proper education and instruction to participants regarding staying home if they show any signs and symptoms of illness, including fever (100.4°F/37.8°C or higher). It is good practice for participants and volunteers to take their temperature at home prior to departure. There must be documentation for each individual attending a given activity or practice that they have been screened with all screening questions answered.

1. **Does the COVID screening violate HIPAA (applicable in the US only)?**

At this time, Special Olympics is exempt from HIPAA as HIPAA only applies if organizations/providers transmit personal health information (PHI) electronically for transactions that HHS has adopted standards including submitting for financial claims or is considered a clearinghouse or a health plan. However, each delegation should still put in place a process to protect health information as best as possible.

1. **What do I as HOD do with the completed screening forms?**

Each HOD will provide the completed screening forms to Taylor Wolf with SONE at the specific competition they were training for or at the instructed time for sports/activities participated in that do not have a culminating event.

**Sport Specific Guidance**

1. **Are we allowed to practice any sport we would like**?

Please refer to the SONE website and return to play page for sports that are approved. This list will be continuously evaluated and updated as time goes on.

1. **How do I prepare a sport specific practice plan for the sport(s) I wish to practice with my team?**

Please work with Nate Parks with SONE to discuss sport specific practice planning. The HOD and Nate will identify a plan that makes sense for each time with understanding the size and challenges each team is faced with. Please understand that social distancing and appropriate use of PPE equipment is required at all times.

1. **Is Overnight Travel/Stay allowed for teams when attending an event?**

At this time, all overnight travel as a team for events is prohibited. This will be continuously evaluated. Please check our website for updates as time goes on.

1. **How do I handle shared equipment?**

SONE participants should be encouraged to use their own equipment when practicing whenever possible. Any shared equipment must be sanitized between use. Team funds can be accessed to purchase appropriate sanitation products or additional equipment.

**Individuals at High Risk**

1. **Why are participants living in long-term care facilities considered high risk?**

The list of individuals at high-risk is based on guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO). Research has shown that individuals with disabilities living in long-term care facilities are at increased risks of transmission as well as complications. The intention behind this is regarding individuals living in licensed long-term care facilities.

This issue will continue to be evaluated and further guidance may still come on this topic.

1. **Are we restricting participation, preventing athletes and volunteers from participating if they identify as “high risk”? Are we treating athletes and volunteers the same? i.e. do we restrict athletes and allow volunteers?**

At this time, the recommendation from SOI is that all individuals who identify as high risk should be **strongly encouraged to stay home,** but the guidance does not mandate that a Program must restrict participation on this basis. This guidance applies to all participants (athletes, coaches, volunteers, etc.). However, it is the responsibility of SONE and the local delegation to ensure that participants are provided education and information about hygiene and prevention measures, as well as who is considered at high risk, per CDC and WHO guidelines so they can make an informed decision regarding their participation. Additionally, the local delegation is responsible for implementing safety control measures to mitigate risk of all participants in attendance. SONE may also have alternative ways for engagement via virtual or at home activities, as feasible. This guidance will continue to be evaluated based on evolving clinical and legal considerations. Please refer to the SONE website and return to play page for resources and education related to who is high risk and proper safety precautions.

**Venue Set-up**

1. **How should food and beverages at events be handled**?

During Phases 1 and 2, participants should bring their own food and water/beverage if needed, when possible. There should be no shared food nor shared water jugs/beverage dispensers – individual bottles and packages only. Participants should be served or prepackaged “grab and go” meals in a bag with disposable utensils, napkin, hand wipe included. Condiments should be in individual packages - not large bottles for group use.

Volunteers distributing should be wearing gloves and masks (for phases as required by local regulations.

1. **What type of hand sanitizer should be used?**

Hand sanitizer should be with at least 60% alcohol.

1. **Are Spectators allowed at practices and events?**

This is specific to the event/sport/venue and those specifics will vary per each phase. For example, golf is much more spread out allowing each group to social distance with greater ease than say at a bowling event. SONE staff will provide guidance on spectators to HOD’s of participating teams prior to each state and regional competition. For practices, each HOD will need to provide guidance to participants, which will need to ensure SONE and local guidelines are being followed. Regardless, each individual group/family will need to social distance from other groups/families.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

1. **May I use team funds to purchase appropriate PPE for my team?**

Yes, please contact Kay Drwal, Office Administrator, with SONE to request use of team funds.

1. **Are masks required during practices?**

At this time, SONE is requiring that all participants and attendees of a practice wear masks except when the person is actively engaged in exercise or the specific activity. The sport of basketball is the only exception to this rule, masks are required during 5v5, 3v3 and skills at all times.

1. **May a participant use a face shield instead of a mask?**

It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. At this time, clinical guidance suggests that a face shield should be used *in addition to*a facemask in certain clinical settings, not as a replacement for a mask. A face shield alone does not provide proper protection from the spread of COVID-19 via droplets in the air. At this time, it is not recommended that a face shield be used instead of a facemask at SONE activities.

1. **If someone says they have a medical reason for not being able to wear a facemask, how should a Program handle this?**

At this time, if an individual is unable to wear a mask for any reason, they will not be able to participate in SONE activities. The use of the mask is not only to protect the individual, but to protect others in attendance and reduce possible transmission. Individuals unable or unwilling to wear a mask in Phases 1 and 2 should be invited to participate in virtual or at home activities. Please contact Alisa Hoffman, Director of Health and Community Services, with SONE for support in this area.

**Fundraising**

1. **Does this protocol apply to fundraising events or do the local authority guidelines apply?**

SONE and local delegations are expected to follow the rules and regulations from their local authorities regarding hosting fundraising events and participation in Phases 1 and 2. Disinfection and infection control measures should be included. SONE participants with high risk are reminded it is recommended they stay home until Phase 3. Additional guidance forth coming.

**Point of Contact**

1. **Who do I contact with questions?**

For local volunteers and participants, please contact our Special Olympics Nebraska (SONE) COVID-19 representative: **Nate Parks, Vice President of Program (****nparks@sone.org****)**