



# COVID-19 and Congress 2020

**Special briefing session - March 11**

**Summary of discussions**

[congress2020.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-and-congress-2020](https://congress2020.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-and-congress-2020)

## 1. Current Situation

### 1.1 Public Health Risk/Response

- The Federation is monitoring information and advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and other health authorities' recommendations.
- Anyone planning to attend Congress is asked to check PHAC's travel advisories and take note of self-isolation requirements.
- We are watching how universities and major conference organizers are responding to COVID-19 to inform our own decisions about Congress.

### 1.2 Western University's Pandemic Planning Group (PPG)

- The PPG has been dealing with the COVID-19 issue since January 2020.
- The Federation is working closely with Jane O'Brien, head of the PPG.
- We are working together based on recommendations of PHAC and other health authorities.
- Our job is to make sure decisions made by the PPG in relation to Congress are reflective of the input from the Federation and its members, and that these decisions are being communicated as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- Precautionary measures are already in place on campus.

### 1.3 COVID-19 Advisory Committee

- The Federation is appointing a special COVID-19 advisory committee.
- The committee will advise the Federation on all aspects of our response, including:
  - risk assessment;
  - contingency planning;
  - communicating with members;
  - collaborating with scholarly associations and other key partners.
- Committee members will be drawn from different regions and disciplines, and will bring years of experience working with their associations and attending Congress.
- We will be sharing the names of our COVID-19 advisory committee as soon as they have all confirmed their participation



## 2. Contingency Planning

### 2.1 Decision-making process

- The following criteria will be guiding our decisions:
  - Protecting public health, and the health of Congress participants, is paramount.
  - Our decisions will be based on the best available information, from the most credible sources.
  - Congress is a partnership, so we're committed to working through this challenge in collaboration with Western University and our scholarly associations.

### 2.2 Virtual participation

- The Federation is working quickly to determine what options exist to support virtual programming and participation.
- We are in discussion with Western University about their technological capacity and bandwidth.
- We will be providing associations with advice on how to supplement their actual meetings with virtual options.

### 2.3 Early bird deadline

- The early bird deadline of March 31 remains in place, and prospective Congress attendees are still encouraged to register by that date to get the best pricing.
- Changing the deadline would mean a loss of revenue for associations.

### 2.4 Refund policy

- The refund deadline has been extended to April 30, 2020.
- The Federation is waiving the \$25 administration fee for those who request a refund due to COVID-19 concerns.
- If Congress does not go ahead, all attendees will be eligible for a full refund of their Congress fee.
- Refunds of association conference fees will be managed on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with associations.

Please visit [congress2020.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-and-congress-2020](https://congress2020.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-and-congress-2020) for all the latest updates.