

CORONAVIRUS

New Coronavirus Fears Risk Delaying Event Industry Comeback

BY JULIUS SOLARIS

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While the event industry is busy with its reopening plans, a resurgence in hospitalizations is once again casting serious doubts about the safety for attendees. As a result, we have updated our coronavirus [Outlook and Recovery Timeline](#).

	APR-JUNE 2020	JULY- SEPT 2020	OCT-DEC 2020	JAN-MAR 2021
LIKELIHOOD OF COMEBACK	UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY
RISK OF HOSTING YOUR EVENT	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE

Ron Rich was a volunteer at the National LGBTQ Task Force event. He helped out with hospitality for the annual gala fundraiser for the association.

He is also [one of three people](#) who died as a result of contracting Covid-19 during the event.

A very tough story to hear. One that clashes with the positive news of reopening of venues and events around the world.



284

While the **industry is split on reopening** for very valid reasons on both ends, new but predictable information is arising that may inform event owners' and businesses' decision to reopen events.

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The Resurgence of Covid-19-Related Hospitalizations

Covid-19 cases are on the rise. That in itself is not a warning sign. In fact, it could be related to an increase in testing.

The more testing, the more cases. This is at least how many are dismissing the issue.

The problem is that hospitalizations are also on the rise, and as **epidemiologist Dr. Brian Labus told us**, this trend should alarm event professionals.

While some doctors in Italy are talking about the virus **losing steam**, that seems not to be the case in North and South America.

- › Arizona seems to be the most alarming case with **hospital bed capacity at 83%**.
- › Texas has reported record growth in hospitalizations for **several days in a row**, up 42% since Memorial Day.
- › California reports a rise in **hospitalizations for most of the past two weeks**.

The situation is similar in many other states such as **Nevada, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah**, and we could also guess in Florida where Covid-19 cases are at an all-time high (but the state does not report on hospitalizations).

Around the world, a resurgence in the virus spread in a Beijing market is once again **sending the city into lockdown** with major sporting events immediately canceled.



This concerning rise in hospitalizations should guide event professionals in the areas affected to seriously reconsider their event plans.



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Protests May Impact Cases in the Next Four Weeks

The recent protests in the wake of George Floyd's death may also have an impact on the spread of the virus as recently discussed by computational analysts.

While it is outside of this article to discuss the (absolute) legitimacy of standing up for one's rights and protesting, it is legitimate to ask ourselves what the aftermath of these mass gatherings will be.

Elements that preoccupy analysts are the "shouting, tear gas, pepper spray, and closely packed jails."

These elements add uncertainty to the next few weeks.

Complete Disregard of Physical Distancing

One of the most worrying trends is that, even if mandatory physical distancing is in place and face masks are required, the response on the ground seems to be quite different.

The viral video of journalist Arash Markazi, viewed by over 16 million on Twitter alone, shows the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas at reopening.



Arash Markazi

@ArashMarkazi

Las Vegas is officially back.



284

No distance whatsoever and hardly anyone wearing masks despite the hotel inviting everyone to wear masks and distance with signs.



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An analysis from a local Las Vegas news site painted a picture of safety precautions and great measures in place that guests largely ignored.

This should sound quite alarming to event planners. It shows that, even if measures are put in place at events, it's absolutely not guaranteed that attendees will follow them.

And even if the event staff could police the attendees and enforce the rules, once attendees go back to the hotel, there is no guarantee of protection from infection. Infection exposes events to liability. Infections will damage any brand going ahead with their plan 'at all costs'.

And, worst of all, infections will ultimately kill people.

The result of this climate of uncertainty are situations such as the upcoming rally of President Donald Trump in Tulsa, where organizers added the following disclaimer to the registration page:

"By attending the Rally, you and any guests voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to Covid-19 and agree not to hold Donald J. Trump for President, Inc.; BOK Center; ASM Global; or any of their affiliates, directors, officers, employees, agents, contractors, or volunteers liable for any illness or injury."

Strategy and Outlook for Event Planners

The spike in hospitalizations and lack of physical distancing should encourage event professionals to review their plans to go back to events.

We are updating our outlook for the next few months with an increased risk of hosting events in July-September 2020:



LIKELIHOOD OF COMEBACK	UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY EVENT NOW PART OF Skift	SOMEWHAT LIKELY	SOMEWHAT LIKELY
RISK OF HOSTING YOUR EVENT	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	MODERATE	MODERATE

Planners should follow the guidelines outlined by epidemiologists and the WHO to run safe meetings:

DIRECTIONS FOR EVENTS

✓ LOCAL	✓ SMALL	✓ 30 MINUTES	✓ SINGLE DAY
✗ NATIONAL	✗ LARGE	✗ 60 MINUTES	✗ MULTI DAY

New data recently acquired by EventMB on a sample of 1,000 event professionals indicates that 75% of event planners expect to go back to business in or after Q4 2020 and only 25% see Q3 as a viable option.

WHEN DO YOU EXPECT TO GO BACK TO BUSINESS?



Virtual events seem to be the safest strategy for event professionals who are seeking brand and business continuity with the demand for virtual event platforms skyrocketing.

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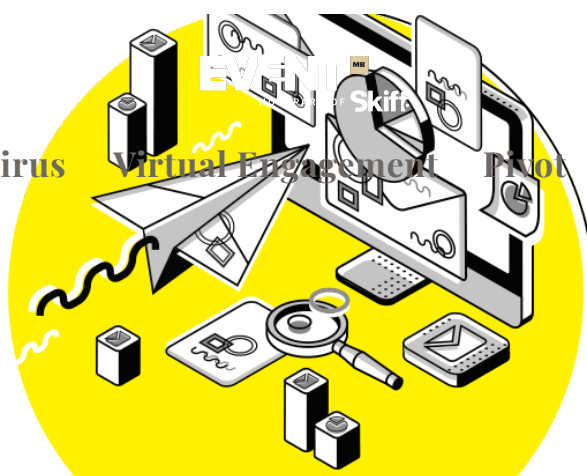
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