



## **MEDIA ALERT FRIDAY, MARCH 6**

### **Special Olympics PA'S 2nd Annual Indoor Winter Games Cancelled Due To Health Concerns**

**(Norristown, PA) March 6, 2020** - Special Olympics Pennsylvania (SOPA) is dedicated to the mission of providing year-round training and athletic competition to individuals with intellectual disabilities. SOPA has made the very difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Indoor Winter Games scheduled for March 7 - 8 in York County due to concerns related to the spread of the coronavirus. While this news is incredibly disappointing for all of us, the health and safety of our athletes, volunteers, staff, and partners is our top priority.

We have been closely monitoring the evolving situation with coronavirus all week, and we have been coordinating with Special Olympics, Inc. and Special Olympics North America, the PA Dept. of Health, and various health professionals. Until yesterday, there were no confirmed cases of coronavirus in PA, MD, VA, or DE. However, 3 cases were confirmed in MD yesterday and 2 presumptive positive cases were just announced by Governor Wolf in PA this morning, with suspected cases being tested in several other areas as well. We serve a population where many are at a heightened risk (age, compromised immune systems, and/or medically fragile), and our competitions require people to travel from all parts of the state to convene in venues and engage in sport. Therefore, we no longer believe that we can prudently proceed with the Games and ensure a safe and healthy environment.

While canceling events is truly disappointing for athletes who have trained for months to compete – as well as for the volunteers, family, friends and our staff and board who support them and look forward to cheering for them – we know that our love of sport doesn't compare to the importance of protecting the health and safety of all involved.

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