

## "Coronavirus outbreak in USA is unavoidable."

These words from the CDC must be a wake-up call to all destinations to be prepared. Better to be unnecessarily prepared than caught off guard.

Up until last week Coronavirus was primarily in Asia and we were concerned about its effect on international travel. And then it suddenly erupted into Italy and Austria. That means travelers who were in these countries over the last few weeks could be all over the world now. Thus the concerns that it can erupt into the United States. This is a disease carried by travelers from country to country and town to town. It could have devastating effects on travel and trade and thus sweeping effects on world economies when and if travel and trade are curtailed. This is why the world stock markets have been in decline the last two days.

This from the CDC website: What May Happen

More cases are likely to be identified in the coming days, including more cases in the United States. It's also likely that person-to-person spread will continue to occur, including in the United States. Widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States would translate into large numbers of people needing medical care at the same time. Schools, childcare centers, workplaces, and other places for mass gatherings may experience more absenteeism. Public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded, with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths. Other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and transportation industry may also be affected. Health care providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed. At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it. Nonpharmaceutical interventions<<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/index.html>> would be the most important response strategy.

I don't want to be an alarmist, but I do want you to be prepared and not caught off-guard.

Most destination disaster plans cover severe weather and disasters like fire and earthquake. The CDC says Americans should prepare for disruptions to daily life, quarantines, public facility closings, etc.

I suggest you consider some of the following:

- \* Update your communications plans.
- \* Review your emergency reserve funds and be prepared to cover your expenses if there is a significant downturn in hotel/meals tax revenues.
- \* Ask your hotels and group facilities if they have a plan and are prepared for group cancellations and quarantines.
- \* Gather your City/County disaster preparedness team and have a discussion about what your community will do if cases of coronavirus start popping up.

AGAIN, I don't want to cause any panic or overreaction. I do want you to just take some time and go through "what-if" scenarios, update your plans and follow the news closely in the coming weeks.

Here are some links to the CDC website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6908e1.htm>

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