

# American Cancer Society Suspends Hope Lodge Program

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to worsen, we've been forced to make the very difficult decision to suspend operations for our Hope Lodge program.

Hope Lodge is an important resource for patients who must travel long distances for cancer treatment, however what we're experiencing is unprecedented. Some hospitals have begun to turn away all but the most pressing medical cases. Yet, it has been our intent to keep Hope Lodge facilities operating as long as we are able to ensure a safe and healthy environment for patients and their families, as well as our volunteers and staff.

The continued escalation of the COVID-19 threat nationwide has made it clear that we will soon reach a point where we cannot meet the standard of ensuring a safe and healthy environment. We greatly value and rely on our Hope Lodge volunteers and staff. Many are understandably concerned about inadvertently exposing patients to additional risk, leading to fewer people being able to help out at the Hope Lodge. A growing number of states have made shelter-in-place mandates. Our teams are not considered essential health care workers and therefore not exempt from the guidance provided by local authorities.

We are taking action now to prepare to suspend this service before we reach that point where we cannot provide a safe and healthy environment. We have made the incredibly difficult decision to suspend our Hope Lodge program as of Friday, March 27th until further notice.

Our main priority now is to help our current guests. We have begun working with guests to find other resources that might be available in the community. These could include alternate lodging programs or helping find assistance to get back home.

This is a heartbreaking decision for the American Cancer Society and our staff. However, we feel it is the only responsible decision we can make as this pandemic grows. The health of our staff, volunteers and guests surpasses even our will to serve.

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