

March 12th, 2020

Dear NASW-NYC Family,

In response to the rapidly changing information and circumstances with respects to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the National Association of Social Workers-NYC Chapter (NASW-NYC) has **postponed our 13th Annual Leadership Awards Gala. The new date will be October 8th, 2020, where we will be able to honor and celebrate you as well as NASW's 65th Anniversary!** This is part of our effort to work with our National Office as well as local leadership to be part of the effort to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. The National Association of Social Workers-NYC Chapter believes that the health, well-being, and safety of our members, supporters, and community is of the utmost importance.

Please know this has been an incredibly difficult decision for NASW-NYC and our Board of Directors as we have been looking forward to celebrating Social Work Month by honoring you and the amazing social workers, organizations, and allies, who contribute to the well-being of NYC every day. This difficulty is compounded by the reality that similarly to all not-for-profit organizations, as a membership based not-for-profit organization, we rely heavily on our Leadership Awards Gala, our sole fundraising event, to offset our financial burden of declining membership so that we can continue our social justice and advocacy work on behalf of the profession and marginalized communities.

Like many other organizations, we have made significant financial and other investments upfront in the past several months of planning. With the rapidly changing information, as well as local and national response to COVID-19 changing daily, we cannot be released from our financial obligations to contracted vendors. While no one could have foreseen these events unfolding, it is our desire and plan that you will continue to support our profession and celebrate with us. **Please note that all tickets and sponsorships will be honored at the postponed event on October 8th, 2020 at Stage 48.**

Social workers, like many health and behavioral health professionals, are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their well-being, the people to whom they provide services, their families, and others in the community. NASW has been working on multiple fronts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure access to services, such as [advocacy to ensure insurance coverage for teletherapy](#). Additionally, we have been extremely saddened and angered by the xenophobic response and hate crimes geared towards our friends, family, colleagues, and loved ones of Asian descent. We strongly condemn these acts of violence and the spreading of false rhetoric that has and continues to be extremely harmful. We remain committed to social justice and equity for all, and remind our colleagues, family, friends, and clients that one of our core values is to honor the dignity and worth of each person. We encourage you to educate others about the illness and support those who are impacted by completely unwarranted rhetoric and hate crimes. We are stronger together and we stand united in our support of our loved ones and all individual and communities impacted.

We continue to encourage that you educate yourselves about COVID-19 and take the safety precautions outlined by the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#). COVID-19 is spread through respiratory secretions (e.g. droplets from coughs and sneezes) of an infected person to another person. Please remain at home if you have influenza like symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, or if you've traveled to countries with a [CDC Level 3 Travel Health Alert](#). Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds (make handwashing fun by signing or humming the chorus to one of these popular [songs](#) or use an alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Please follow the advice of medical professionals with respects to mitigating the risk for yourselves, families, and clients you serve.

Thank you again and we encourage you to take care of your health. We look forward to seeing you on **October 8th, 2020 for our 13th Annual Leadership Awards Gala.**

Sincerely,



Dr. Claire Green-Forde, LCSW
Executive Director
NASW-NYC Chapter



Mr. Benjamin Sher, MA, LMSW
President, Board of Directors
NASW-NYC Chapter