



HIMSS 20 canceled due to coronavirus concerns

It is the first time the event has been canceled in its 58-year history

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HIMSS cancels 2020 global health conference due to coronavirus concerns

by [Heather Landi](#) | Mar 5, 2020 12:43pm



FierceHealthcare

The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) today canceled its global health conference.

HIMSS organizers said the 2020 HIMSS Global Health Conference & Exhibition was called off due to the coronavirus outbreak and the "unacceptable risk to bring so many thousands of people together in Orlando next week."

Organizers made the decision following recent reports from the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC). HIMSS said in an [announcement](#) posted on its website.

HIMSS20 was slated to take place next week, March 9-13, at the Orlando Convention Center. It's the first time in 58 years that the conference has been canceled. President Donald Trump [had been slated to speak](#) on Monday at the conference to address healthcare interoperability. The conference had been a "go" as of Wednesday, according to organizers.

HIMSS organizers have taken a lot of heat on social media and from attendees for going ahead with the conference under the shadow of pandemic fears from the virus known as COVID-19.

"We recognize all the hard work that so many have put into preparing for their presentations and panels that accompany every HIMSS conference," said Hal Wolf, president and CEO of HIMSS. "Based on evaluation of evolving circumstances and coordination with an external advisory panel of medical professionals to support evidence-based decision making, it is clear that it would be an unacceptable risk to bring so many thousands of people together in Orlando next week."

HIMSS had convened a medical advisory board earlier this week to advise it on the evolving coronavirus outbreak.

The advisory panel recognized that industry understanding of the potential reach of the virus has changed significantly in the last 24 hours, which has made it impossible to accurately assess risk, HIMSS said in its announcement.

Additionally, there are concerns about disproportionate risk to the healthcare system given the unique medical profile of global conference attendees and the consequences of potentially displacing healthcare workers during a critical time, as well as stressing the local health systems were there to be an adverse event.

Organizers said the cancelation was "unavoidable in order to meet HIMSS' obligation to protect the health and safety of the global HIMSS community, employees and local residents, as well as for the healthcare providers tasked with keeping our U.S. and global communities healthy."

HIMSS20 exhibitors and attendees will be contacted with further information regarding booth contracts and registrations.

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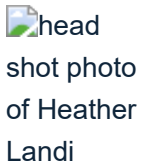
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