



Boston Athletic Association
Boston, MA 02116
www.baa.org
media@baa.org

September 3, 2020

B.A.A. Announces COVID-19 Medical & Event Operations Advisory Group; Postpones Registration for 2021 Boston Marathon

Cross-sector group to advise on safe return to mass participation road races

BOSTON—The Boston Athletic Association (B.A.A.) has announced the formation of a COVID-19 Medical & Event Operations Advisory Group, comprised of medical, public safety, and race operations experts, as well as city and state officials. The group will establish a framework to advise the B.A.A.’s leadership, board of directors, and staff on when, and how, the Boston Marathon and other large, in-person B.A.A. road races can be held safely again.

Registration for the 2021 Boston Marathon has been postponed and will not take place in September. The Medical & Event Operations Advisory Group’s findings will inform the registration timeline.

“COVID-19 has affected mass participation road races in ways that we never could have imagined,” said Tom Grilk, C.E.O. of the B.A.A. and co-chair of the advisory group. “Convening this cross-sector group of professionals with decades of experience in epidemiology, viral infection, mitigation strategies, and our own race operations was entirely necessary to begin planning for the 125th Boston Marathon.”

The Medical & Event Operations Advisory Group will recommend strategies that address the health and safety of participants, volunteers, staff, and community members. Recommendations will be developed in accordance with the most current guidelines issued for large-scale events by the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control. The group will develop framework for the B.A.A. that addresses risk factors specific to the Boston Marathon including size and other local and international considerations for the pandemic. Outcomes, including an updated registration timeline for the 125th Boston Marathon, will be shared.

“We seek to determine with some specificity how and when large-scale road running events organized by the B.A.A. may be able to reasonably resume, while also providing input on which operational aspects will change as events are organized and managed,” said Dr. Aaron Baggish, Co-Medical Director for the B.A.A. and Boston Marathon, Director of the Cardiovascular Performance Program at the Massachusetts General Hospital Heart Center, and co-chair of the advisory group.

“September is usually a time for the B.A.A. to begin opening registration for April’s Boston Marathon and planning for an already established field size. We know, however, that we cannot open registration until we have a better understanding of where the virus may be in the spring. This group will be immensely helpful in helping the B.A.A. determine a safe return to in-person running events of magnitude,” said Grilk.

In addition to Grilk and Baggish, the COVID-19 Medical & Event Operations Advisory Group includes:

- **Dr. Michael O’Leary**, President, B.A.A. Board of Governors; Professor of Surgery, Harvard Medical School
- **Dr. Cheri Blauwet**, B.A.A. Board Member; Director Kelley Adaptive Sports Research Institute, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital/Brigham and Women’s Hospital

- **Dr. Paul Biddinger**, Medical Director for Emergency Preparedness, Mass General Brigham; Chief of the Division of Emergency Preparedness, MGH
- **Dr. Gregory Ciottone**, Director, Division of Disaster Medicine, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
- **Kate Davis**, Director, Mayor’s Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment, City of Boston
- **William Evans**, B.A.A. Board Member; Chief of Police, Boston College
- **Dr. Lisa Stone**, Medical and public health consultant
- **Dr. Larry Madoff**, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- **Dr. Charles Morris**, Associate Chief Medical Officer; Vice President, Medical Affairs, Brigham and Women’s Hospital
- **Samantha Phillips, M.A., M.P.H.**, Director, Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
- **Dr. Jeff Hopkins**, Medical Director, Town of Hopkinton; Chair, Department of Emergency Medicine, Milford Regional Medical Center
- **Dr. Sophia Dyer**, Medical Director, Boston EMS; Co-Medical Director, B.A.A. and Boston Marathon
- **Dr. Pierre d’Hemecourt**, Co-Medical Director, B.A.A. and Boston Marathon; Primary Care Physician, Children’s Hospital Boston
- **Dr. Brooke Nichols**, Assistant Professor, Department of Global Health, Boston University School of Public Health

The Medical & Event Operations Advisory Group will work in consultation with state and city officials. The group will also consist of a working committee of medical and road race operations professionals including B.A.A. Director of Operations Lauren Proshan, Race Director Dave McGillivray, and Medical Coordinator Chris Troyanos.

“The years of expertise and knowledge among the members of the advisory group will help inform the safest way for the world to return to run from Hopkinton to Boston. While we may not know today when that is, we know we will be back,” Grilk said.

The 2020 Boston Marathon, originally scheduled for April 20, was postponed to September 14 by Boston Mayor Martin Walsh due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 28, following Mayor Walsh’s announcement cancelling the marathon as a live, mass participation road running event, the B.A.A. announced the Boston Marathon would be held as a virtual event from September 5 to 14.

ABOUT THE BOSTON ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (B.A.A.)

Established in 1887, the Boston Athletic Association is a non-profit organization with a mission of promoting a healthy lifestyle through sports, especially running. The B.A.A. organizes and manages the Boston Marathon, and also supports comprehensive charity, youth, and year-round programming. The Boston Marathon is part of the Abbott World Marathon Majors, along with international marathons in Tokyo, London, Berlin, Chicago, and New York City. Since 1986, the principal sponsor of the Boston Marathon has been John Hancock. For more information on the B.A.A., please visit www.baa.org.

###

MEDIA CONTACT:

Kendra Butters
 Director of Communications
kbutters@baa.org
 508-954-0210