



Office of the Governor
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: 312-814-2121
May 4, 2020

Dear Governor Pritzker,

We are writing on behalf of Illinois Swimming. Illinois Swimming is responsible for governing members of USA Swimming, our national governing body, for competitive swimming within the state of Illinois. Our organization represents approximately 20,000 athletes, coaches, officials, and non-athlete members of USA Swimming.

Illinois Swimming appreciates the tireless efforts of Governor Pritzker, his staff, and the Illinois Department of Health in making Illinois a safe state during the Covid-19 pandemic. Public health is our primary concern. We also, for the benefit of the commonwealth, would like to encourage the Governor and various state and local leaders to allow pools to open in a limited capacity.

We are concerned about the plans for pool openings, which is admittedly based on the limited public information available. Our position is that the use of pools is not homogeneous, and we urge you to consider that moving forward. We respect the Illinois Department of Public Health's concerns about social distancing and common contact issues, but stress that lap swimming is distinctly different than recreational swim.

We have reviewed as much information, data, and research as is available to the public and believe there is a path for the transitional opening of swimming facilities while still maintaining public safety. We have also consulted with our member clubs, park districts, high schools and other agencies that operate aquatics facilities throughout Illinois, both to gain insight into their concerns as well as an understanding of what is reasonable and possible in terms of a reopening plan.



Swimming pools have unique advantages in opening in a limited capacity. The process of pool disinfection both chemically (chlorine, and to a lesser extent bromine) and physically (ultra-violet systems) have been noted in research and by the Center for Disease Control as deactivating agents of the novel Coronavirus. The CDC reported on March 10, 2020 that “there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans through the use of pools and hot tubs. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (e.g. with chlorine and bromine) of pools and hot tubs should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19.”

Current literature indicates COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are within six feet of each other, or by touching a surface or object that has the virus and then touching their own mouth, eyes, nose or ears. To that end, Illinois adopted reasonable restrictions for golf facilities which we believe serve as a model for ensuring social distancing and protections from points of common contacts.

The golf restrictions mitigate the potential of contracting novel Coronavirus by focusing on reducing capacity, limiting points of common contact, reducing staff, and increasing signage. These same principles could easily be applied to swimming pools.

We recognize that any individual facility may not be able to open their doors under the proposed set of restrictions for economic reasons, but we urge you to allow the agencies, individuals and organizations in this state who own and operate pools to make the economic decisions on their own, and not try to create a one-size-fits-all plan for aquatics facilities across the state.

We would like to offer our assistance and expertise in any further discussions on the reopening of pools. Thank you for your time, consideration, and tireless work during this unprecedented time.

Yours truly,

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