

Coronavirus Update

01/23/2020

ASTA Members:

As you have likely heard, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is closely monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that has the potential to cause severe disease and death. It was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and Chinese health officials have reported hundreds of cases, including a number outside of Hubei Province. In an effort to contain the coronavirus, the Chinese authorities have suspended air and train travel in Wuhan, and those traveling to China should be aware that planned travel within the country may be disrupted.

A number of countries, including the United States, have been actively screening incoming travelers from Wuhan and human infections with the coronavirus have been confirmed in Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, and South Korea. The United States announced its first infection with coronavirus detected in a traveler returning from Wuhan on January 21, 2020.

Your clients will likely have questions about the disease and its risks to travelers. If that occurs, we recommend directing them to the [CDC's Coronavirus Page](#) for the most up-to-date recommendations.

As a reminder, ASTA has in the past issued member guidance concerning what obligation, if any, they have to advise their clients of the risks associated with travel to regions affected by the viral outbreaks such as the Zika virus. While an advisor generally has a duty to disclose all information known to the advisor that is material to the client's travel plans, this duty may be limited where the information has already been widely disseminated by the news media or otherwise and is now essentially a matter of public knowledge.

Advisors who elect to make a specific disclosure concerning the coronavirus in light of the situation should provide objective third party information, such as that available on the government's CDC and [State Department](#) websites. Referral to these resources is an appropriate means of apprising clients of the current situation so that they can make an informed decision.

Because advisors are not in a position to make a "yes" or "no" recommendation as to whether a client should travel to any particular place at any given time, statements that could be construed as definitive advice should be avoided. Ultimately, it is the traveler who must make that decision, ideally doing so in an informed manner and in light of his or her own individual risk tolerance.

ASTA will continue to monitor the situation closely and will update our members as appropriate as new information becomes available.

More Information

- [CDC Coronavirus Page](#) (January 23, 2020)
- [State Department's China Page](#) (January 23, 2020)