

November 1, 2018

Dear ASHA Convention Attendee,

We have been alerted that ASHA members and attendees are receiving calls regarding their participation in the 2018 ASHA Convention from Unite Here, a union in place at some of the hotels in Boston. Some of the calls have been perceived as aggressive and threatening. Much of the information being shared by the callers is incorrect and misleading—not the least of which is the implication that they received attendee or member contact information from ASHA.

**ASHA did not and would never release your phone number or contact information without your explicit permission.**

The union callers are contacting attendees, regardless of whether they are staying in a striking hotel or not, urging them to boycott the ASHA Convention. They have also been pushing our members and attendees to call or email me personally as a disruptive measure to pressure ASHA to cancel the Convention. We will not. Attendees are also being told that they will be in physical danger and will need to cross a picket line. This is not true.

You should know that I have been in regular, near daily, contact with leadership from the Union, the hotels and the corporate offices of Marriott, monitoring the situation. The Union paid me a visit here at the ASHA offices, and I engaged in dialogue and reiterated to them that we would not cancel the Convention. As shared in our message on October 17, we recognize that many of you have personal opinions about union support and we have provided you with information and opportunity to act on your own convictions. I informed them of our efforts to ensure that all of you had information to make your own decisions.

The new escalation of personal, aggressive calls to our members and attendees is not acceptable to ASHA, regardless of support for the union employees. Local law enforcement is now involved. If you receive a call that you consider aggressive or threatening, and can determine the originating phone number, please [email us](#) as soon as possible.

Your experience, and safety, at the ASHA Convention is my paramount concern. Additional security and contingency plans have been put in place if the situation is not settled before you arrive in Boston.

I will share as much information we know below.

- There are 23 hotels in 4 states with employees who are members of Unite Here on strike. In Boston, there are 7 total hotels with employees on strike.
- There are 29 hotels in the ASHA Convention block. Four are hotels with union employees on strike: the Westin Boston Waterfront (our leadership hotel), the Aloft Boston Seaport, the Element Boston Seaport and the W Boston. None of these hotels have picket lines impeding their entrances or exits. If protesters are nearby, uniformed police are also present. I have received no reports of physical altercations involving guests.
- Many staff in each of the 4 hotels supporting the ASHA Convention are either not members of a union, or opted not to strike and, in fact, are working. Additional staff have been brought in from other properties. Updates from the leadership hotel, and from other meeting planners

with events preceding ours, have reported no significant interruption of meeting services. The callers are suggesting that the hotels are operating at 5% capacity, which is simply not true.

- A number of other hotels in our block of 29 fall under the Marriott umbrella and do not have any employees on strike.
- The calls from the Union appear to be random and unrelated to where an attendee is staying, or whether the recipient is even registered for the ASHA Convention. When we were alerted by members that they were being contacted by the union yesterday, we focused on determining how callers were obtaining their information. We believe, supported by reports from other meetings who are experiencing similar tactics, that the union is using information available on the ASHA Convention website and the ASHA website, and then using internet resources to search for contact information. For example, the Program Planner/mobile app and the PDFs of the official Program Book and Exhibit Guide identify authors and affiliations, as well as exhibitor information. Some member contact information is available through ProFind. With a name and affiliation, and simple internet searching, the union is tracking down potential attendees. **Again, they have not been provided contact information by ASHA or any of our partners.**
- We are increasing security measures. Wearing your ASHA Convention badge is always required, but we will be checking more closely this year, so please be sure you are wearing it during all activities. Likewise, please be sure to remove your badge when you leave the Convention facilities.
- We are working with ALL the ASHA hotels to ensure security is sufficient and visible. At hotels with striking employees, and those that may be near striking hotels, we are discussing with Marriott how to increase security presence to increase member comfort and sense of safety.

We will continue to provide updates on the strike, as available, in advance of the 2018 Convention as well as onsite in Boston.

I want to personally reiterate that our team is determined to ensure the ASHA Convention in Boston is an amazing experience for all of you. We already know that it's going to be one for the record books—the most CSD professionals gathered in one place ever! We are sorry that some of you are receiving unwanted calls and will answer any questions or concerns you may have about the strike and your participation. We look forward to seeing all of you in just two weeks!

Ellen Shortill

Director, Convention and Meetings