

Statement on 2020 ODACS Competition and COVID-19



ODACS appreciates the current concerns about the possible spread of COVID-19 here in Virginia. As of the writing of this statement, the Virginia Department of Health has confirmed eight “presumptive positive” cases in our state.

ODACS regional and state competitions draw large crowds each year, and at each event there is always a risk of spreading various types of the cold, flu, and other transmissible diseases. While we are thankful that COVID-19 is currently not wide-spread in our state, we understand that there is a possibility that additional cases will be confirmed in the weeks ahead.

Hundreds of ODACS students have worked very hard for many months to prepare for the competition in March. Because of the sheer volume of preparation, and because of the indefinite nature of the future of the COVID-19 virus, we do not see postponement of competition events to be a viable alternative. Therefore, in consultation with the ministries that host the events, we are making the deliberate decision to continue to move forward with the competitions as scheduled. At each event, we will remind students and adults of basic prevention methods such as frequent hand washing, using a tissue to cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing, and minimizing or avoiding the shaking of hands. Individuals who are exhibiting possible symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, coughing, and shortness of breath, are encouraged not to attend.

ODACS respects the concerns of parents who may prefer to not risk allowing their children to spend several hours in a large crowd at competition. However, we also regret that for students who miss competition categories that require their presence on competition day, we will be unable to offer accommodations such as postponement or rescheduling.

Wednesday, March 11, 2020