



ONTARIO RESTAURANT HOTEL & MOTEL ASSOCIATION

Member Update!

WHO overreacts with travel advisory

April 27, 2003

Dear ORHMA Member:

As you may be aware, from recent media reports, the World Health Organization (WHO) has issued a travel advisory that recommends people defer all nonessential travel to Toronto because of SARS.

However, both Canadian and US medical officials are disputing the WHO risk assessment. Health Canada, Ontario's Ministry of Health, Toronto Public Health and the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) state that SARS in Toronto has only been spread to people who know—either through family or work— or have had very close contact with existing SARS patients. The general risk of infection remains very low.

All levels of Government have been vocal in their opposition to the WHO advisory. Health Canada said in a recent statement that

Health Canada does not support the WHO's position; it is safe to travel to Toronto

Health Canada is in the process of formally challenging the WHO's Toronto travel advisory. Although WHO officials acknowledge that the outbreak has likely passed its peak in Canada, it is unclear if they will lift the travel advisory.

The WHO is expected to review its travel advisory later this week. It is uncertain if they will be persuaded to reverse their decision on the current advisory.

Fortunately, media has begun reporting that perhaps the WHO issued its advisory prematurely. Many media correspondents arriving in Ontario to cover this story have been surprised to find that, despite appropriate public health precautions, a vast majority of Ontarians are continuing with their daily activities as usual.

For further information and regular updates, visit the ORHMA website at

www.orphma.com

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Contact ORHMA Government Relations at 905 361-0268 or 800 668-8906