

## **ACTE Survey -- Meeting and Business Conferences Not Affected By H1N1 Influenza Fears**

Prague (26 October 2009) - The good news for the business meetings and professional conferences industries is that fear of the H1N1 "swine" influenza is not a factor in either bookings nor attendance for the remainder of 2009 and 2010, according to a statement issued today by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) (<http://www.acte.org>) at their recent Global Education Conference currently being held in Prague. Citing the findings from a recent ACTE survey, association Executive Director Susan Gurley stated that while an underlying concern for the spread of the H1N1 influenza is prevalent in the business travel industry, an overwhelming number of corporate travel managers and travelers are not letting it interfere with their immediate itineraries.

"Though a majority of corporations have indicated they have 'serious concerns' about the potential threat of the H1N1 influenza, these concerns are not yet carrying over into the travel planning process for the remainder of 2009 and 2010, nor have they warranted any special consideration outside of their overall disaster contingency planning," said Crum. "On one hand, it is commendable that companies are not giving in to panic. Yet on the other hand, this is a situation that can develop very quickly and it is very important that the appropriate arrangements be put in place."

Ninety-one percent of survey respondents of 105 international companies responding to a survey taken in early October indicated they are not holding off on meetings or conferences until after the influenza season. (Only 9 percent responded "yes.").

Ninety-four percent responded "No" to the question "Have your travelers asked not to travel in flu season this year?" (Only 6 percent said Yes.)

Gurley further stated that these statistics indicate two things: that global commerce is confident that the H1N1 threat will fail to materialize just like the avian influenza; or that it will be much milder than the worst case scenarios currently cited by government and media sources. This position is supported by additional numbers regarding corporate preparedness regarding the H1N1 influenza specifically.

Sixty-three percent reported that they had serious concerns about the spread of the H1N1 influenza (with 37 percent stated the did not).

In answer the question, "Do you have a plan or instructions for travelers who may get caught up in airport screenings with flu-like symptoms," only 34 percent said "Yes," (with 66 percent answering "No.")

Follow up investigation by the association reveals that nearly all corporations are urging employees and travellers to stay home if they are feeling ill, regardless of their symptoms, and that bottles of hand sanitizer are as common at meetings as the little bowls of mints.

Gurley warned that a sudden upsurge in the H1N1 influenza, in which much larger numbers of travellers or employees were involved could create a spike in internet demand, and tax a company's ability to effectively communicate through that means. "This is an ideal time to get that mechanism in place, and to make sure that key people are trained in its use," said Gurley.

### **ABOUT ACTE:**

The Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) represents the global business travel industry through its international advocacy efforts, executive level educational programs, and independent industry research. ACTE's membership consists of senior travel industry executives from 82 countries representing the (euro)463 billion business travel industry. Our members serve more than 12 million business travellers worldwide. With the support of sponsors from every major segment of the business travel industry, ACTE develops and delivers educational programs in key business centers throughout the world. ACTE has representation in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Canada, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and the United States. For more information on ACTE, please go to [www.acte.org](http://www.acte.org). (<http://www.acte.org>) (<http://www.acte.org>)

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