January 17, 2012

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Society for Prevention Research, I am writing to provide an update regarding the labor dispute involving the Hyatt Regency San Francisco, where the Society for Prevention Research is scheduled to hold its Annual Meeting in May, 2013. Although the conference is more than a year off, and we fully hope that the labor dispute will be resolved, we feel it is important to communicate with you the steps we are proactively taking to address the situation. The principal issues are outlined below. For further information, please see the page dedicated to this matter on the SPR website. We are in regular contact with both the union and the Hyatt and will keep you abreast of the latest developments at this website.

HISTORY OF THE LABOR DISPUTE

As many of you are aware, UniteHere (one of four unions at the hotel) and the Hyatt Corporation have been in conflict over a wage-and-benefits package for employees as well as a disagreement over union-membership voting rules. While tentative agreements have been made regarding wages and benefits (the same as those in other hotels in San Francisco in which UniteHere has members; benefits are 100% employer paid), policies regarding union-membership voting rules remain unresolved. Please note that the workers at the hotel are not on strike. Because of the continued disagreement regarding union-membership rules however, UniteHere is urging travelers and meeting planners to boycott the hotel. SPR is not alone in being contacted.

TERMS OF OUR HOTEL CONTRACT WITH THE HYATT

The Board of Directors received legal counsel to determine if we could legally terminate or re-negotiate our contract with the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. The short answer from our attorney is “not without serious financial penalties”. It is important for SPR members to know that our contract with the Hyatt does not include a termination clause for labor disputes. To abrogate our contract would subject the Society to a cancellation penalty of $100,290 ($139,806 after May 30). To put these penalties into perspective, they represent approximately one year of the SPR operating expenses, eliminating all reserves and significantly impacting our ability to hold this and future meetings. Consequently, the Board of Directors of SPR has determined that participating in a boycott of the Hyatt Regency San Francisco is not a viable course of action for our organization. While SPR is supportive of the ongoing negotiations process and has urged both parties to resolve their issues in a timely manner that is fair to all, it is committed to holding its 2013 meeting as planned.
We understand that many members of the organization feel strongly about issues of workers' rights. We also know that all appreciate that the mission of SPR as an organization is to advance "scientific investigation on the etiology and prevention of social, physical and mental health, and academic problems and on the translation of that information to promote health and well being". All funds received to support the conference are based in that mission. The Board cannot authorize expenditures that do not pertain to the work and mission of the organization, nor do we have the money in our current operations budget to pay substantial penalties.

THE FUTURE

Certainly, the issues that have emerged from the Hyatt labor dispute will occupy a central place in the Board's deliberations as we approach future contracts. The Society books its hotels approximately four years in advance: contracts for the Annual Meetings through 2015 are already in place. As a rule, we seek out meeting sites that provide excellent facilities and amenities for our activities and that ensure the comfort and safety of our members. We also rotate locations so that we visit different geographic regions of the U.S. If SPR can achieve the goal of having contracts that include a termination clause for labor disputes, we will do that.

At the 2012 conference wrap-up session, Friday, June 1st, there will be time set aside to talk in more depth about the complexities of the issues, the current status of the situation, and to hear members' concerns.

IF CONTACTED BY THE UNION

Some SPR members have reported being contacted by UniteHere representatives urging them to support a hotel boycott. Please feel free to refer UniteHere representatives to Jennifer Lewis, Executive Director at 703-993-4850, ext. 213 or jenniferlewis@preventionresearch.org, should you receive a call or an email. If you feel you have been contacted inappropriately, please let us know by contacting Jennifer Lewis.

Jennifer Lewis and I will be more than happy to discuss these issues with any member of SPR. I can be reached via email at debgs@uchicago.edu or by phone at 773.256.5170.

Thank you for your continued work and support of the mission of SPR.

Sincerely,

Deborah Gorman-Smith
President
Society for Prevention Research

FAQ — Labor/Management Dispute

January 17, 2012

**SPR will host its 2013 Society for Prevention Research Annual Meeting, May 28-May 31, in San Francisco.** In recent weeks we have received questions from members regarding a labor management dispute between the Hyatt Corporation and the UniteHere labor organization that is occurring at several Hyatt hotels – one of which is the site of our SPR meeting in San Francisco, the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. This Q&A provides more information for any members with questions.

What is the nature of the dispute between the Hyatt Corporation and UniteHere?
UniteHere and the Hyatt Corporation are in the midst of a conflict over a wage-and-benefits package for employees as well as a disagreement over union-membership voting rules. UniteHere is now urging travelers and meeting planners to boycott the hotels involved in the dispute, including the Hyatt Regency San Francisco. Other hotels being targeted for boycotts are in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Honolulu.

Will SPR participate in a boycott?
No, not at this point in time. After looking into the matter, SPR has determined that participating in a boycott of the Hyatt Regency San Francisco hotel is not a viable course of action. While SPR is supportive of the ongoing negotiations process and has urged both parties to resolve their issues in a timely manner that is fair to all, it is committed to holding its meeting May 28-May 31, 2013, as planned. It is not possible to terminate or re-negotiate the contract with Hyatt without a very significant financial penalty that would be highly detrimental to SPR.

SPR’s mission as an organization is to advance "scientific investigation on the etiology and prevention of social, physical and mental health, and academic problems and on the translation of that information to promote health and well being”. We don’t believe that boycotting this hotel would contribute toward SPR’s mission. Conversely, the financial penalty associated with changing our contract would substantially impede SPR’s capacity to move forward with this core mission.

Are the hotel workers at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco on strike?
No. The workers at this Hyatt hotel are not on strike, nor are health and safety issues at Hyatt Regency San Francisco on the negotiating table in the dispute between UniteHere and Hyatt.

Why is SPR being approached by UniteHere?
UniteHere has contacted many organizations whose meetings take place at the hotels it is targeting. We’re not alone – other national societies, meeting at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco and in other Hyatt properties, have also been contacted by UniteHere, with similar requests.

Will SPR respond in any way to the labor dispute?
While SPR will not participate in a boycott, SPR will remain in active contact with the hotel, monitor the situation as the contract negotiations continue, and keep our members updated on any developments.

What if I am contacted by UniteHere about the boycott?
Some SPR members have reported being contacted by UniteHere representatives urging them to support a hotel boycott. Please feel free to refer UniteHere representatives to SPR at 703-934-4850, ext. 213 or jenniferlewis@preventionresearch.org, should you receive a call or an email. If you feel you have been contacted inappropriately, please let us know by contacting Jennifer Lewis. If you have any question at all about this matter or the SPR in general, please call SPR at 703-934-4850, ext. 213. Jennifer Lewis, Executive Director, will be happy to assist you.

**Will SPR members have opportunities for discussion about this situation?**

At the 2012 conference wrap-up session, Friday, June 1st, there will be time set aside to talk in more depth about the complexities of the issues, the current status of the situation, and to hear members’ concerns.