



American Society of  
Travel Advisors

January 14, 2021

The Honorable Robert R. Redfield  
Director  
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
395 E Street SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Director Redfield:

On behalf of the 14,000 members of the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA), I write today to respectfully request modifications to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) January 12 order requiring proof of a negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 for all air passengers, including U.S. citizens, arriving from a foreign country.

While we understand the rationale behind the CDC's January 12 order, it will create a number of challenges for our members, ranging from ensuring that clients can obtain testing in-destination without disrupting their return trip to the implications of a positive test (or a false positive) while abroad to a general chilling effect on future bookings. As such, we respectfully request the following:

- That the order's effective date be delayed until at least February 28. This will permit additional time for air carriers to train their frontline staff, for destinations to ramp up their testing capabilities and for other stakeholders to prepare for this unprecedented and substantial change to the travel ecosystem affecting many thousands of U.S. citizens.
- That the CDC – and not airlines or other aircraft operators – be responsible for initiating the waiver process described in the order, under which 14-day waivers can be granted to one or more foreign countries that lack available testing capacity.
- That this waiver authority be implemented as quickly and as widely as possible. In our view, waivers should be freely granted if there is any question whether a U.S. citizen will be able to easily and affordably access a timely COVID-19 test in-destination. We would note in particular that the stress this order places on returning travelers seeking to return home as planned opens the door to predatory pricing practices and similar abuses. Finally, we can't stress enough how critical it is that the CDC make these country-specific waiver determinations as quickly as possible so that travel advisors and their clients can act accordingly. Every day of delay increases the likelihood of chaos and disruption on the effective date.

- That consideration be given to a “test-on-arrival” system for returning U.S. citizens. Specifically, CDC could consider a modified version of New York State’s travel regime, wherein the traveler must quarantine upon arrival (with allowances for returning home from the airport) and be tested as soon as possible thereafter. If a negative test result is presented, the traveler is released from quarantine. If not, they are required to quarantine for 10 days after arrival.

Thank you, on behalf of our 14,000-strong membership, for considering ASTA’s views on this critical matter. If you or your staff has any questions about this or any related to the travel industry, don’t hesitate to contact me or Eben Peck, ASTA’s Executive Vice President of Advocacy, at (703) 739-6842 or [epeck@asta.org](mailto:epeck@asta.org).

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zane Kerby". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Zane" and last name "Kerby" clearly distinguishable.

Zane Kerby  
President and Chief Executive Officer