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WHAT IMPACT HAS COVID-19 HAD ON HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS’ BEHAVIOUR AND EXPERIENCES AT CONGRESS?

**Ashfield and IPCAA join forces to find out what HCPs really think about virtual medical congresses in new global study**

**Ashfield Meetings & Events (part of UDG Healthcare PLC) and the International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association (IPCAA) have joined their respective areas of expertise to find out what healthcare professionals really think about virtual medical congresses in a study released today.**

Through a survey of more than 300 physicians from six countries (US and EU) and across 14 therapy areas, the global healthcare meetings specialist and the esteemed advisory association have gained detailed insights that are set to help medical societies, professional congress organisers (PCOs) and industry consider how to shape virtual congresses of the future.

“As we are all aware, by March this year the COVID-19 pandemic had forced the end of ‘normality’ for the majority across the globe, and one of the inevitable repercussions within the healthcare sector was that many associations and PCOs had to either cancel or postpone their events,” explains IPCAA’s Co-President, Nicky Simpson. “Equally, a significant number of congresses took the bold decision to go 100% virtual; many with just a few weeks to pivot. At IPCAA, we wanted to find out what HCPs experienced as a virtual attendee; mainly to understand what component parts of the congress have made the positive and potentially enduring transition to virtual. We knew that Ashfield would be the perfect partner for this research thanks to their unrivalled congress expertise and previous white papers on the subject.”

The study – the second part of which is planned for before the end of 2020 – looks at a variety of elements of the virtual congress, highlighting HCPs’ thoughts on accessibility and technology, how they viewed the online activities including industry symposia and poster sessions, through to connecting with industry and peers.  ***Continues…***

2/2

“The aim of our research was not to determine *if* virtual congresses will surpass physical as the preferred model for attendance, nor was it to expose the limitations of virtual with a view to it being a stop-gap solution and an immediate and necessary response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” adds Ashfield’s Client Partnership Director, Andrew Moore. “It was purely to assess the end-to-end virtual congress experience from the perspective of the HCP – identifying which elements of a traditional, in-person congress can be, or have been, successfully replicated in a virtual setting.”

Nicky Simpson continues, “We’ve gained some valuable insights from these initial findings – information that medical congress stakeholders will undoubtedly be able to use as we prepare for a world in which hybrid congresses become part of the ‘new normal.’ It is vital that evidence such as this enables us to plan and collaborate to offer rich, impactful experiences that will complement virtual with the live, face-to-face events which we all hope will return in the near future.”

For a detailed yet readable summary report of IPCAA and Ashfield’s initial findings, click on the link below or go to [www.ashfieldmeetings.com](http://www.ashfieldmeetings.com)

[ASHFIELD / IPCAA - HCP Experiences of Virtual Congress (summary report of initial findings)](https://start.ashfieldmeetings.com/acton/fs/blocks/showLandingPage/a/36531/p/p-0024/t/page/fm/0)

**Ends.**

For further information, please contact Ashfield Meetings & Events Global Head of Marketing, Fiona Geeson – Fiona.geeson@ashfieldhealthcare.com

**Notes to editors:**

**ABOUT ASHFIELD MEETINGS & EVENTS**

**Creating experiences with impact and certainty.**We are one of the largest events agencies dedicated to the healthcare industry, with unparalleled knowledge of this highly regulated sector. With our expert, in-house creative team, we incorporate the best of traditional and digital channels, providing blended learning journeys and truly personalised experiences that resonate. The face-to-face, virtual or hybrid meetings we create, lift us from the routine and the ordinary, creating a shared, live experience and energy. [www.ashfieldmeetings.com](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/vOWzC7N4TlKKAJhP6nHs?domain=start.ashfieldmeetings.com)

**ABOUT  IPCAA**

IPCAA’s mission is to ensure the most beneficial outcome for all parties involved in medical congresses, through the development of common and consistent congress policies and through recognised partnerships with medical societies. IPCAA also facilitates and organises platforms for discussion and education of topics amongst relevant meetings industry stakeholders and contributes to improve the understanding of topics such as compliance and transparency. [www.ipcaa.org](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/AcVFC8P4u1006Khyslg3?domain=start.ashfieldmeetings.com)