



National Aquatics Groups Form Coalition to Help Get More People in the Water Safer, Sooner

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Coalition members to work with national, state, and local policymakers to implement best practices to get purposeful swimming back on track

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO— More than 20 water safety and competitive water sports organizations today launched the [Aquatics Coalition](http://www.Aquatics-Coalition.org) (www.Aquatics-Coalition.org) to help guide states and municipalities across the country in reopening swimming facilities for instructional aquatics in the safest possible manner.

The Coalition, comprised of organizations spanning from learn-to-swim programs, health and rehabilitation groups to competitive aquatics organizations, is advocating for the safe reopening of facilities for purpose-driven aquatics, including using pools for swim lessons, exercise, rehabilitation, and athletic training. The Coalition has [developed best practices](#) based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health experts who discovered that chlorine and bromine inactivate the novel coronavirus and has not found evidence the virus can be spread through pools.

The Coalition has also shared its best practices with the National Governors Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and the National Association of County and City Health Officials in an effort to encourage other states to re-open swimming facilities.

“We applaud the public health professionals and policymakers on the front lines of combating transmission of COVID-19 and we understand that their jobs are incredibly difficult, so we want to help be part of the solution,” said Shana Ferguson, Chief Commercial Officer of USA Swimming and former collegiate swimmer at the United States Naval Academy. “The Aquatics Coalition is bringing together some of the best minds in water sports to identify and share best practices to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission in natatoriums and outdoor venues, while allowing a safer, phased re-entry into the pool.”

By implementing the Coalition’s suggested guidelines, pool facilities can help speed the return of purpose-driven aquatics to the benefit of a community’s overall health, while helping to reduce drowning rates for children ages one to four, who are at the greatest risk of drowning in backyard pools.

“Swim lessons are vital to ensuring that children remain safe in the water and to reducing drowning rates, particularly since unintentional drowning is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of 14. Of particular concern is the fact that Black children are 4 times more likely to drown compared to their white counterparts in the United States and Hispanic and Latinx children are 3 times more likely to drown. While many of us in the aquatics community are working to address historically unjust systems that have created a lack of access to safe water and swim instruction for Black Americans, we welcome an opportunity to be back in the pool so we can advance our mission to create equity, access and enjoyment both around and outside the water,” said Megan Ferraro, executive director of the [ZAC Foundation](#).

“Aquatics-based exercise and rehabilitation programs have proven to be important contributors for both mental and physical health,” said Rowdy Gaines, three-time Olympic gold medalist and International Swimming Hall of Fame member. “We want to ensure that individuals who need pools to improve their health and well-being are able to access them in the safest manner as soon as possible.”

For more information visit www.Aquatics-Coalition.org or follow the Coalition on Twitter [@Aqua_Coalition](https://twitter.com/Aqua_Coalition) and Facebook at Facebook.com/AquaticsCoalition.

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The Aquatics Coalition and its members are poised to work collaboratively with state and local officials, to find solutions to restart purpose-driven swimming.