

The American Cancer Society Will Close All Hope Lodges Because of COVID-19

The free facilities serve tens of thousands of people with cancer and caregivers each year.

March 23, 2020 By Bob Barnett

The American Cancer Society (ACS) is closing its Hope Lodge facilities, which provide free lodging for tens of thousands of people with cancer and their caregivers who need to travel far from their homes for cancer care, because of COVID-19.

“We have made the incredibly difficult decision to suspend the Hope Lodge program as of Friday, March 27, until further notice,” stated the ACS in a press release on Sunday, March 22. The ACS sought to keep the more than 30 Hope Lodges open, “even as some hospitals have begun to turn away all but the most pressing cases.” However, the “continuing escalation of the COVID-19 threat nationwide has made it clear that we will soon reach a point where we cannot meet the standard of ensuring a safe and healthy environment.”

“This was the absolute last thing we wanted to do, but when we start getting shelter-in-place orders, we just have to pay attention to that for all concerned,” said ACS deputy medical director Len Lichtenfeld, MD, according to the Miami Herald. “We had no choice.”

The Herald chronicled the case of Janice Miller, who drove down to the Hope Lodge in Jacksonville, Florida, with her daughter, Lisa Miller Benskys, from Virginia in early January. “You’re already in stress mode, and then you find out your home is pulled out from underneath you,” Miller said. Miller said her daughter, who suffers from a rare genetic disease that required a bone marrow transplant, is incredibly vulnerable to COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, due to a severely reduced immune system. “To even think about staying in hotels,” she said. “It just terrifies me.”

The ACS is working to relocate all residents currently staying in their Hope Lodge facilities.

To read the American Cancer Society’s press release, [click here](#).

To read the Miami Herald article, [click here](#).

To learn more about coronavirus and cancer, [click here](#).

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