

Video Clip: Dr. Joe Leader on relief bill and industry recovery

This is a special feature from *PAX International's* April 2021 [Amenities & Comfort digital edition](#).

With the industry conscious that a full recovery is still a couple years away, how it will manage until then is something still being figured out.

Last month, US President Joe Biden [signed off on legislation](#) that includes US\$14 billion for airlines, plus \$8 billion for airports and \$1 billion for contractors. This offers some solace for the industry, including reversing furloughs issued to some 27,000 American Airlines and United Airlines employees in early 2021.

In April, Dr. Joe Leader, Chief Executive Officer of the Airline Passenger Experience Association ([APEX](#)) and International Flight Services Association ([IFSA](#)), told *PAX International* the Associations are optimistic this will be the last of government funding through to the end of the pandemic.

"I think this will get us back to when we're in real recovery mode," Leader says. "The speed of vaccinations in the US has been going at such a great clip that we really should have a wonderful summer. I believe as long as the borders are opened and there's no mandatory quarantine that people will be wanting to take those international trips because they have two years of pent-up desire to travel," he explains.

As the world returns to normal there are some unknown factors, Leader says, such as how long it will take for long-haul international flights to return, and when passengers will feel comfortable booking and taking these flights.

The Transportation Security Administration ([TSA](#)) indicates that traveler throughput in 2021 is at approximately two thirds of what it was historically in 2019.

"What we can't afford for our world is a roller coaster ride. We need to be told, 'This is the plan,'" Leader says, adding that people need more certainty. "They want to know that they can travel this summer, when they can travel this summer and hopefully where they can travel this summer."

Update on APEX Health Safety

APEX launched the [APEX Health Safety](#) standard powered by [SimpliFlying](#) in January. The program is a customer-centric health safety COVID-19 certification for airlines globally. Eighteen airlines are now certified, ranging from ultra-low-cost carriers to global airlines covering six continents.

The Association has recently made updates to the standard, including a review by the medical board recommending airlines worldwide to include notifications for travelers not to remove masks in airline restrooms and public restrooms. COVID-19 can remain in the digestive system for up to 14 days, Leader explains.

The certification has changed the significance of aerosol transmission, which according to the Association's latest peer reviewed information, has more weight than transmission by touch, Leader says.

The other major change is introducing a fully automated certification system at

AirlineHealthSafety.com for quarterly airline updates. The system indicates where scores increased and decreased and what airlines can do to improve safety for passengers.