

Marathon County Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Situational Report April 13, 2020 (10:00 AM)
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What we Know

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus strain that began spreading in people in December 2019. Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new respiratory virus. On March 11, 2020 the COVID-19 outbreak was characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

As of April 12, 2020, the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) reports 525,704 cases in the United States, and 20,486 deaths. Jurisdictions reporting cases: 55 (50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, and US Virgin Islands).

In Wisconsin, as of April 12, 2020, the [WI Department of Health Services](#) reports 3,341 cases, 974 hospitalized (29%), and 144 deaths. Sixty-four (64) counties have one or more case.

For Marathon County, there are 14 cases and 1 death as of April 12, 2020.

Data continues to be a critical tool to stop the spread during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data is being used to create policies like Safer at Home. Safer at Home distancing measures are meant to [flatten the curve](#) with the goal of protecting the capacity of our community hospitals and health care systems. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services created a [model](#) to estimate the peak for Wisconsin. Due to the time that passes between transmission, symptoms, and test results, policies like Safer at Home will need more time to result in a significant drop in cases. Wisconsin's peak will likely occur between April 23 and May 23, 2020.

Our number one strategy in reducing the impact of this disease is containment and mitigation strategies. Strategies include:

- Stay at home or place of residence as much as possible
- Only travel for essential reasons: to seek health care, for food, or other essential products
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people when possible
- Stay home when sick, except to get medical care
- Wash hands, avoid touching face, eyes and mouth
- Regularly clean of high-touch surfaces
- Isolate those who are sick, quarantine for those who are a close contact

The Safer at Home order is to buy more time to build our health care capacity (medical supplies, health care professionals, and hospital beds), increase testing, and expand contact tracing teams. While testing capacity has expanded in Wisconsin there still is a shortage of ingredients needed to run COVID-19 tests.

Major Developments

U.S.

On April 9, 2020, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued Interim Guidance "[Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)". To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to

COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community. CDC outlines personnel in 16 difference sectors of work.

Wisconsin

On April 6, 2020, Wisconsin Department of Health Services released [guidance on common questions of when to wear a cloth face cover](#). Cloth face covers are not a substitute for physical distancing and handwashing. There may be benefit to reducing transmission of the virus from individuals who do not show symptoms. Guidance is available to the public on when one should wear a cloth face cover and things to keep in mind when wearing a mask.

On April 9, 2020, Governor Evers directed the [Department of Natural Resources to close several state parks to protect the health and safety of Wisconsinites](#). Due to unprecedented crowds, litter, vandalism and out of an abundance of cautions to protect public and safety and to help flatten the curve, designated parks, forests and recreational areas will remain closed beginning April 10 until further notice.

On April 9, 2020, Governor Evers reiterates [options for religious gathers and services](#) while complying with the governor's "safer at home" order.

On April 9, 2020, Wisconsin Department of Health Services promoted [Wisconsin Health Connect](#). Wisconsin Health Connect will provide fast, easy and confidential 24 hours/7 days a week screening by a Registered Nurse trained to assess and triage COVID-19.

On April 10, 2020, Governor Evers announced the state is [seeking volunteers to support Wisconsin's healthcare system](#) by signing up through the Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry (WEAVR).

On April 10, 2020, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services announced that more than 215,000 [FoodShare households](#) will be receiving additional benefits.

A list of [Executive and Emergency Orders](#) and [Press Releases](#) available on WI Department of Health Services website.

Actions Marathon County is Taking

Marathon County Health Department, Emergency Management, and County Administration stay informed on a daily basis. Local actions are guided by the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), [WI Department of Health Services](#), [WI Emergency Management](#), and the State of WI COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). The following pandemic functions are being carried out.

Contact Tracing and Surveillance

- Respond to reports of suspect and confirmed cases within the working day
- Conduct contact tracing for individuals tested positive for COVID-19 to identify close contacts

Community Mitigation

- Isolate residents tested positive for COVID-19 and quarantine close contacts
- Monitor residents who are isolated or quarantined on a daily basis

- Notify the Marathon County Sheriff's Office Dispatch of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts to protect law enforcement officers, first responders, and other public safety workers
- Field calls from residences and businesses on the "Safer at Home" order issued March 24
- Continue to develop alternative isolate site plans for residents known or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 who cannot isolate safely at home in the Wausau and Marshfield area

Health Care System Response

- Attend regional hospitals surge planning calls for awareness and to monitor the need for establishing an alternative care site in Marathon County; monitor [daily snapshot hospital capabilities](#)
- Participate in weekly NCW-HERC (North Central Wisconsin Health Emergency Readiness Coalition) Board of Directors calls to keep abreast of response plans for hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, EMS
- Respond to questions from general public on the need for testing and self-quarantine
- Expand mortuary services within Marathon County
- Monitor PPE resources to be deployed to hospitals, clinics, long-term care, EMS, law enforcement

Communication

- Provide common COVID-19 signage for parks and boat launches within Marathon County to reinforce Safer at Home
- Outreached to the Amish community, plans to increase outreach to the Hmong and Spanish speaking populations
- Provide accurate, timely and consistent information via [Marathon County Health Department website](#) and [Marathon County Health Department Facebook](#)
- Press release [Spiritual Health and Religious Services](#) April 9, [First COVID Related Death in Marathon County](#) April 11
- Respond to media calls and conducted interviews
- Join weekly MCDEVCO municipal meeting and coordinate efforts with the Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce who serves as the touchpoint for the business community
- Field calls from the general public. Coordinate with Marathon County United Way 211 who is also fielding calls from the general public.
- Develop a Safer at Home communication plan for upcoming seasonal changes in how residents spend their time (e.g., rummage sales, farmers markets)

What the Public Can Do

Stay at home as much as possible. Only travel for essential reasons: to seek health care, for food, or other essential products.

Stay at least 6 feet away from other people, when possible. Avoid gatherings of 10 or more people. Wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face, eyes and mouth.

Reach out and ask for help if you're feeling overwhelmed. Call 211 to find a helping professional. Visit [Helping Wisconsin cope](#) during COVID-19.

Contribute to [flatten the curve](#). Our goal is to keep the number of people that need a hospital bed lower than the number of hospital beds available.

Seek credible sources of information from the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) and the [State of WI Department of Health Services](#) to learn more about COVID-19.