

## Marathon County Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situational Report April 20, 2020 (11:00 AM) Joan Theurer, Health Officer

### 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 19, 2020, the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) reports 690,714 cases in the United States, and 35,443 deaths. Jurisdictions reporting cases: 55 (50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, and US Virgin Islands).

In Wisconsin, as of April 19, 2020, the [WI Department of Health Services](#) reports 4,346 cases, 1,190 hospitalized (27%), and 220 deaths. Sixty-four (65) counties have one or more case. [Maps of rates of cases and percentage of deaths by county](#) now available.

For Marathon County, there are 17 cases and 1 death as of April 19, 2020.

Data continues to be a critical tool to stop the spread during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data is being used to guide policies like Safer at Home. Safer at Home distancing measures are being carried out 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.

Safer at Home is working. Wisconsin has seen a decrease in the exponential growth in the number of cases since Safer at Home was put in place on March 24, 2020. Wisconsin's rate of doubling infections was 3.4 days in early March. Over the past two weeks, the rate of doubling is now approximately 12 days. Wisconsin's model show that Safer at Home has saved between 300 and 1,400 lives. The steps Wisconsinites have taken include:

- Staying safer at home by eliminating nonessential outings
- Practicing physical distancing
- Washing hands, covering nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing

The only strategy to slow the spread is to limit physical contact between people, as there are no medications or vaccines to protect against the virus. Safer at Home is enabling Wisconsin to further develop our health care capacity, increase testing, expand contact tracing and isolation capacity, the availability of personal protective equipment for health care workers, first responders, and other public servants required to perform face-to-face services. [Regional hospital capabilities](#) now posted.

### Major Developments

#### U.S.

April 17, 2020, [Symptoms](#) post, expanded symptoms to watch of COVID-19.

April 17, 2020 [Serology Testing for COVID-19](#) post, informed the public the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has developed a new laboratory test to assist with efforts to determine how much of the U.S. population has been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. During the week of March 30, CDC and public health partners began the first stage of what will grow to be wide studies of community transmission.

These initial studies use serum samples collected in the state of Washington and New York City. The second stage will expand to include serologic testing in more areas with high numbers of people with diagnosed infections.

## Wisconsin

On April 14, 2020, Wisconsin Department of Health Services released guidance in response to CDC Interim Guidance “[Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)”. The new interim guidance from CDC does not alter [current Wisconsin guidance](#). Quarantine recommendations are intended for all persons who have had contact with COVID-19. The exception to this guidance is for health care personnel who are subject to different recommendations.

On April 15, 2020, Governor Evers signs COVID-19 Response Legislation. [Assembly Bill 1038](#), now 2019 Wisconsin Act 185, provides critical support and relief for Wisconsinites.

On April 15, 2020, Wisconsin Department of Health Services temporarily suspended BadgerCare Plus children and Medicaid Purchase Plan premiums as of April 1, 2020.

On April 16, 2020, Governor Evers directs Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary-designee Palm to [extend Wisconsin’s Safer at Home Order](#) from April 24, 2020 to 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 26, 2020, or until a superseding order is issued. The order implements some new measures to ensure safety and support the progress made in containing COVID-19, allowing for certain activities to start up again.

On April 16, 2020, Wisconsin Department of Health Services [recommends health care providers test all who are symptomatic](#), even patients with mild symptoms. DHS is actively working on having all health systems have equal access with acceptable turnaround time. In addition, DHS reinforced all suspect, probable cases of COVID-19 are to be reported to local health departments.

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
- Monitor testing capacity among three health care systems
- Followed-up on 607 negative, positive, or contacts to cases reported from March 1 to April 20, 2020

### 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 tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts to protect law enforcement officers, first responders, and public safety workers
- Fielded 163 calls from residences and businesses on “Safer at Home” since March 25, having 9 calls during the week of April 13

- 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 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
- Monitor long-term care facilities supply and staffing capabilities, and management of ill residents
- Respond to questions from general public on the need for testing and self-quarantine
- Expand mortuary services within Marathon County to health care systems, funeral homes
- Develop a county system to respond to PPE requests from allocations received from the state

#### Communication

- Outreach to private/public campgrounds to reinforce Safer at Home social distancing, developed a flyer to post at campgrounds in coordination with Parks Department
- Information mailed to the Plain Clothes community on "Should I travel?"
- Weekly radio program was recorded and broadcast on Hmong radio
- Video on proper handwashing was recorded and posted on YouTube
- Plans for Hispanic outreach was created. Plan includes creating advertisement in the Hispanic paper, creating call line for Spanish speaking people, handouts to be created and distributed to employers and stores frequented by Hispanic persons
- Provide accurate, timely and consistent information via [Marathon County Health Department website](#), page was updated with scrolling message at top
- Information provided to community via [Marathon County Health Department Facebook](#)
  - o Posts: 27, Shares: 301, New Followers: 137 for week of April 13-19
  - o Posts: 162, Shares: 2,432, Followers: 3,358 since March 1
- Press release issued on April 14 on [Garage Sales](#), total of 9 press releases since March 1
- Five (5) contacts with media, two (2) interviews the week of April 13, for a total of thirty-eight (38) contacts with media since March 1
- Join weekly MCDEVCO municipal meeting and promote Save Small Business Fund efforts with the Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce who serves as the touchpoint for the business community
- Field calls to 63 calls from the general public

### **What the Public Can Do**

Stay at home. Limit the amount of time spent making essential trips to the store. Make essential trips no more than once a week.

Limit physical interactions to same people. Less than five people total will help stop the virus from spreading.

Keep at least 6 feet away from others and avoid direct physical contact.

Wash your hands frequently. Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

Stay in touch over the phone with family and friends. 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.

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