

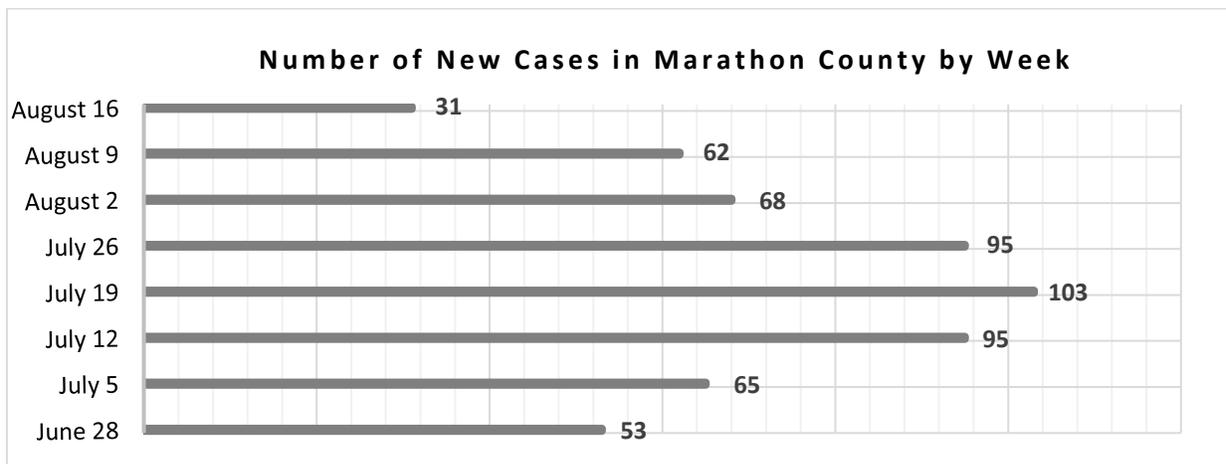
Marathon County Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
 Situational Report August 24, 2020 (10:00 AM)
 Joan Theurer, Health Officer

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.

For the week of ending on August 22,

- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) reports 5,598,547 cases in the United States, and 174,645 deaths.
- [WI Department of Health Services](#) reports 70,009 cases, 60,933 (87.1%) recovered, 5,545 (7.9%) ever hospitalized, and 1,081 (1.5%) deaths. The seven day average of the percent of positive is 7.7%. Refer to [state summary date and county level data](#).
- [Marathon County](#), reports 722 cases, 629 (87%) recovered, 60 (8%) ever hospitalized, and 13 deaths (1.8%). 16,471 residents have tested negative for COVID-19. Refer to [Marathon County COVID-19 Dashboard](#). 20-39 years old account for 39% of all cases, with 23% of all cases among 20-29 year olds. For hospitalizations, all residents have been 20 years or older. As one gets older, risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases. Other factors that increase risk for severe illness are individuals with underlying medical conditions.



Marathon County saw a dip in cases the week of August 16, not having cases this low since the week of June 14. Marathon County’s [COVID-19 activity level](#) has been high as of June 24. The activity level is based on the number of new cases in the past two weeks.

COVID-19 Activity Level Marathon County for the past 2 weeks as of 8/19/2020

Low
Medium
High

Individuals, businesses, and other entities can reduce their risk for exposure by practicing physically distancing and avoid large gatherings, wear a cloth face covering when indoors and in public, wash hands frequently, and stay home if sick.

Strategies being carried out to control the spread of COVID-19 in Marathon County and counties across Wisconsin include: harm reduction behaviors, surveillance activities, and “boxing the virus in”. Controlling the spread of COVID-19 will keep business open and enabling schools to open in the fall.

Harm reduction behaviors are actions everyone can take to reduce their risk for being exposed to COVID-19:

- Watch your physical distance around others and avoid large gatherings,
- Wear a mask when you are not at home and indoor spaces or unable to physically distance,
- Wash your hands frequently, and
- Stay home when sick.

COVID-19 has significantly increased in Wisconsin as more people return to work and have more interactions in public. Wisconsinites are being asked to [wear face coverings](#) as a way to slow and prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus. Refer to [Marathon County COVID-19 Order #1](#) for additional actions individuals, families, businesses, and other entities can do to reduce the risk for COVID-19.

Surveillance is the collecting data to inform health departments how quickly the virus is spreading in communities, who is being infected, and the severity of the virus. Data is important for two reasons: to monitor for warning signs in a surge in cases, and to determine the level of risk for exposure in a county.

“Boxing it in” is a containment strategy to control the spread of the virus and suppress a surge in cases. To “Box in the virus”, health care providers and local health departments working to:

- Test every individual who has symptoms of COVID-19,
- Isolate individuals with COVID-19,
- Find everyone who had close contact to infected people, and
- Quarantine all close contacts.



The capacity of health departments to do contact tracing is important to control the spread of COVID-19 in communities. With the decrease in the number of new cases in the past week, the Health Department has been able to resume monitoring of individuals in isolation and quarantine to assess their COVID-19 symptoms and ensure their basic needs are met.

Major Developments

U.S.

CDC updates for the week of August 16,

[When You can Be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19](#)

[Interim Guidance for Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#)

[Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#)

[When to Quarantine](#)

[Older Adults](#)

[National Wastewater Surveillance System](#)

[Monitoring and Evaluation Action Guide: Wearing Masks as a COVID-19 Community Mitigation Strategy](#)

[Travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
[Information for Pediatric Healthcare Providers](#)
[Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19](#)
[Operating schools during COVID-19: CDC's Considerations](#)
[COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination](#)
[COVID-19 Forecasts: Hospitalizations](#)
[Worker Safety and Support](#)
[Schools and Childcare Programs](#)
[COVID-19 Forecasts: Deaths](#)
[Businesses and Workplaces](#)
[CDC COVID-19 Response Health Equity Strategy: Accelerating Progress Towards Reducing COVID-19 Disparities and Achieving Health Equity](#)
[Travel during the COVID19 Pandemic](#)
[Food and Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cases in the U.S.](#)

On August 17, the CDC MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report) released [Racial and Ethnic Disparities Among COVID-19 Cases in Workplace Outbreaks by Industry Sector – Utah, March 6-June 5, 2020](#)

On August 19, the CDC MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report) published [COVID-19 Among American Indian and Alaska Native Persons – 23 States, January 31 – June 3, 2020](#)

On August 12, CDC release [CDC provides more than \\$200 million to address COVID-19 health disparities in Indian Country](#)

On August 21, the CDC MMWR (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report) published [Disparities in Incidence of COVID-19 Among Underrepresented Racial/Ethnic Groups in Counties Identified as Hotspots During June 5-18, 2020 – 22 States, February – June 2020](#)

Wisconsin

On August 17, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development [released information on unemployment data](#)

On August 17, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [What experts say about how to interpret COVID-19 data like positive cases, deaths and hospitalizations and what to avoid](#)

On August 18, the Wisconsin Public Radio published [How Bars Are Fueling COVID-19 Outbreaks](#)

On August 18, The Badger Herald published [Wastewater samples from sewage treatment plants used to test for COVID-19](#)

On August 18, the Wisconsin Public Radio published [As New COVID-19 Cases Decline, Chicago Removes Wisconsin from Quarantine List](#)

On August 18, the Washington Post published [WHO warns young people are emerging as main spreaders of the coronavirus](#)

On August 19, the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service released [The Voices of Marathon County Students Returning to School During COVID-19](#)

On August 19, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services released [DHS Launches COVID-19 Individual Decision Tool to Help Wisconsinites Keep Each Other Safe](#)

On August 19, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services released [Guidelines for the Prevention, Investigation, and Control of COVID-19 Outbreaks in K-12 Schools in Wisconsin](#)

On August 19, NOWCAST WISN 12 News published [State health department: Coronavirus outbreaks in schools 'inevitable'](#)

On August 19, WSAW-TV 7 News published [DHS: It's too early to determine if mask mandate is effective, discusses school expectations](#)

On August 19, the Leader-Telegram published [Health Officials: Masks slow spread, but aren't foolproof on their own](#)

On August 20, the Center Square Wisconsin published [Wisconsin DHS says no large scale testing as kids head back to school](#)

Actions Marathon County is Taking

The 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 confirmed cases and conduct contact tracing to identify close contacts within 24 hours. Notify close contacts within 48 hours. Monitor those in isolation and quarantine to assess their COVID-19 symptoms and ensure their basic needs are being met.
- Participate in a state/local health department community testing advisory group to develop strategies to support Wisconsin's testing goals of 85,000 COVID-19 tests per week. County level targets are based on the number of known cases in the community, the estimated number of contacts, and estimated number of acute respiratory infections. Marathon County's target for August is 1,000 tests per week. Testing goals include;
 - o Respond to every employer, corrections, and congregate care outbreak,
 - o Test every nursing home resident and staff member,
 - o Establish community testing programs for symptomatic individuals in target communities, and
 - o Ensure everyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms gets a test.
- Further the development of a comprehensive and coordinated testing plan with area health care systems and the Portage Health & Human Services and Wood County Health Department; exploring ways to increase testing of children when schools reopen
- Follow-up on 19 active facility outbreaks to ensure best practices are in place to control further spread, having 48 facility outbreaks since April 7

- Follow-up on 19,358 negative, positive, or contacts to cases reported from March 1- August 23, 2020, an increase of 1,039 in the past week. Negatives include imported negative tests from the previous week and underrepresent the total number of negative tests as of August 23
- Trained 6 new contracted employees to join the team of 17 contracted employees to carry out disease investigation and contact tracing activities

Community Containment and Mitigation

- Isolate residents tested positive for COVID-19 and quarantine close contacts and assure they have a safe place to stay
- Maintain 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
- Field 430 calls from businesses or business related questions since March 25, having 1 call during the week of August 16
- Field questions and provide recommendations to public/private schools regarding Department of Public Instruction (DPI) reopen guidance for the fall
- Promote the Wausau Area Chamber of Commerce [Consumer Safety Pledge](#) initiative
- Field questions and [complaints](#), provide education and resources to 12 area businesses regarding Wisconsin's requirement for face coverings. Received 221 complaints the week of August 16 for a total of 441 since the on-line form was made available on August 13

Health Care System Response

- Monitor regional availability of health care resources for the COVID-19 response; refer to [daily snapshot hospital capabilities](#)
- Participate in the NCW-HERC (North Central Wisconsin Health Emergency Readiness Coalition) hospital updates to stay abreast of health care system capacity in regards to testing and caring for patients
- 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
- Carryout a county-wide system to respond to PPE requests from allocations received from the state

Communication

- Outreach efforts to populations:
 - o Hispanic – Assisted food distribution occurring in the Abbotsford area
 - o Hmong – Interview on Hmong Radio regarding the Executive order on Face Coverings; when to wear them, when not too, and when to wash them. Shared the online face covering complaint form. Added two handouts in Hmong on Contact Tracing and What to Do If Diagnosed
 - o Plain Clothes – Mailed weekly state and local data, risk on traveling, and general information about how to protect self and others from the spread of COVID

- Provide accurate, timely and consistent information via [Marathon County Health Department website](#)
 - o Added a thumbnail with the title, and linked the resources in other languages
- Inform the community via [Marathon County Health Department Facebook](#)
 - o Posts: 19, Shares: 72, New Followers: 17 for week of August 17
 - o Posts: 622, Shares: 6,915, Followers: 4,642 since March 1
- Conducted 1 interview, and 1 media contacts during the week of August 17; a total of 32 press releases and 164 interviews/contact with the media since March 1
- Field 68 calls from the general public during the week of August 17

What the Public Can Do

Watch your distance, stay 6 feet from others who don't live in your household. When gathering with other people, limit the number of people. Avoid group gatherings where physical distancing is hard to maintain.

Wear a cloth face covering when indoors or in an enclosed space, other than at a private residence.

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

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

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.