

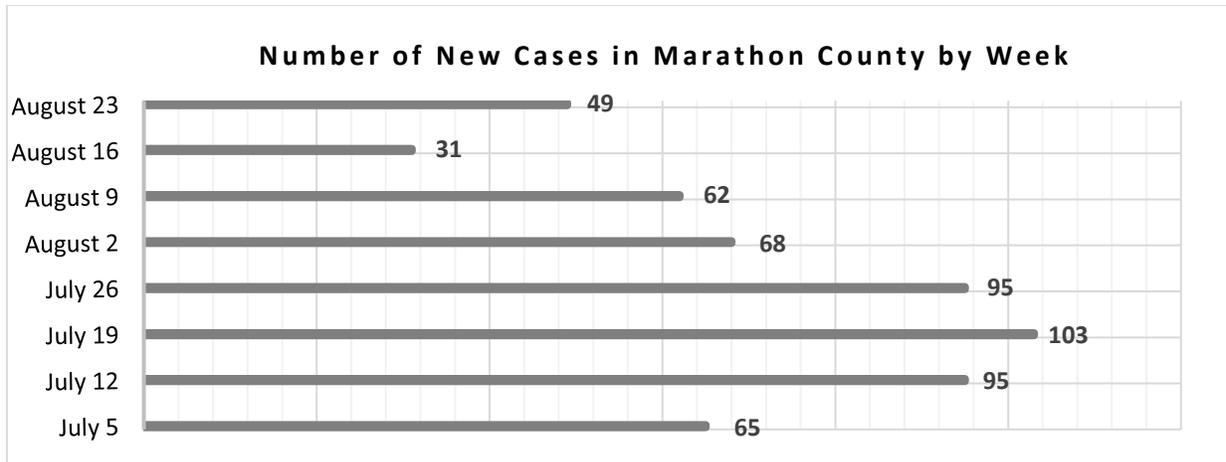
**Marathon County Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Situational Report August 31, 2020 (10:00 AM)
Joan Theurer, Health Officer**

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 29,

- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) reports 5,890,532 cases in the United States, and 181,143 deaths.
- [WI Department of Health Services](#) reports 74,800 cases, 66,075 (88.4%) recovered, 5,775 (7.7%) ever hospitalized, and 1,119 (1.5%) deaths. The seven day average of the percent of positive is 8.1%. Refer to [state summary date and county level data](#).
- [Marathon County](#), reports 771 cases, 675 (87.5%) recovered, 63 (8.2%) ever hospitalized, and 13 deaths (1.7%). 17,435 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’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 and percent change from the previous to current week.

<p>COVID-19 Activity Level Marathon County as of 8/26/2020</p>	Low	<p>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.</p>
	Medium	
	High	

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 23,

[Test for Current Infection](#)

[Guidance for Administrators in Parks and Recreational Facilities](#)

[Testing](#)

[COVID-19 and Animals](#)

[Nursing Homes and Long-Term Care Facilities](#)

[Limiting Workplace Violence Associated with COVID-19 Prevention Policies in Retail and Services Businesses](#)

[COVID-19 Employer Information for Utility Workers](#)

[Operational Considerations for Schools](#)

[After You Travel](#)

[COVID-19 Employer Information for Warehousing](#)
[What Warehousing Workers Need to Know about COVID-19](#)
[Businesses and Workplaces](#)
[Returning to Work](#)
[What Utility Workers Need to Know about COVID-19](#)
[Travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
[Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020](#)
[Mitigating SARS-CoV-2 Transmission – Four Overnight Camps, Maine, June-August 2020](#)
[COVID-19 Forecasts: Hospitalizations](#)
[About Masks](#)
[COVID-19 Forecasts: Deaths](#)
[People with Moderate to Severe Asthma](#)
[Considerations for Use of SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Testing in Nursing Homes](#)
[Worker Safety and Support](#)
[Guidance for Dental Settings](#)
[COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Country](#)
[Cases in the U.S.](#)

On August 25, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services release [Trump Administration Strengthens COVID-19 Surveillance with New Reporting and Testing Requirements for Nursing Homes, Other Providers](#)

On August 27, NBC News published [CDC director walks back testing guidance, but does not alter recommendations on website – public health experts say that testing anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19 is crucial to controlling the pandemic](#)

Wisconsin

On August 21, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [State lacks ideal coronavirus testing capacity for reopening of college campuses, schools, top health officials says](#)

On August 21, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [It's crucial to get a flu shot this year amid the coronavirus pandemic, doctors say](#)

On August 24, Channel 3000 posted [UW System president, bar-and-restaurant groups ask Wisconsin businesses to 'encourage responsible behavior' amid fall return of 170,000 students](#)

On August 24, FOX 11 News posted [How COVID-19 stacks up against other causes of death in Wisconsin](#)

On August 25, Wisconsin Public Radio published [Conservative Group Files Lawsuit That Would Strike Down Wisconsin's Mask Mandate](#)

On August 26, Wisconsin Public Radio published [More Than A Quarter Of Inmates at Green Bay Prison Test Positive for COVID-19](#)

On August 26, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [Wisconsin officials won't name schools that have COVID-19 outbreaks, or say how big they are](#)

On August 26, Wisconsin Public Radio [published Wisconsin Universities Begin Reporting Cases of COVID-19](#)

On August 27, Wisconsin Department of Health Services release [COVID-19 Health Alert #15: Wisconsin DHS Continues to Recommend Testing for Individuals with Recent Close Contact with COVID-19](#)

On August 28, Governor Evers releases [Wisconsin Applies for Lost Wages Assistance Grant](#)

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 16 active facility outbreaks to ensure best practices are in place to control further spread, having 55 facility outbreaks since April 7
- Follow-up on 20,446 negative, positive, or contacts to cases reported from March 1- August 30, 2020, an increase of 1,088 in the past week. Negatives include imported negative tests from the previous week and underrepresent the total number of negative tests as of August 30
- Support a team of 22 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 435 calls from businesses or business related questions since March 25, having 5 calls during the week of August 23

- 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 6 area businesses/organizations regarding Wisconsin's requirement for face coverings. Received 74 complaints the week of August 23 for a total of 515 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 the food distribution occurring in the Abbotsford area. Provided information for parents regarding going back to school, masks, and how to care for someone when they are ill.
 - o Hmong – Interviewed on Hmong Radio regarding on face covering order, FAQ order, how to wear masks safely, as well as the online compliant form
 - o Plain Clothes – Mailed weekly state and local data, planning for in-person classes, and infection control checklist for classrooms
- Provide accurate, timely and consistent information via [Marathon County Health Department website](#)
 - o Added new handout on preparing children for the school year
 - o Updated resources now available in Hmong
- Inform the community via [Marathon County Health Department Facebook](#)
 - o Posts: 17, Shares: 58, New Followers: 16 for week of August 24
 - o Posts: 639, Shares: 6,973, Followers: 4,658 since March 1
- Issued 1 press release, conducted 3 interviews and 3 media contacts during the week of August 24; for a total of 33 press releases and 167 interviews/contact with the media since March 1
- Field 87 calls from the general public during the week of August 24

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.