

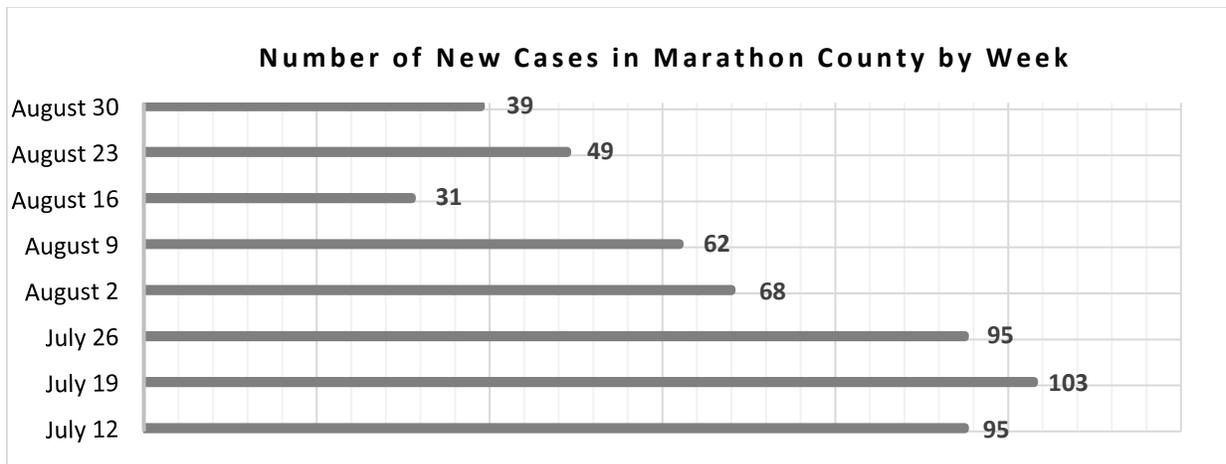
**Marathon County Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)  
Situational Report September 8, 2020 (10:00 AM)  
Joan Theurer, Health Officer**

**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 September 5,

- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) reports 6,181,474 cases in the United States, and 187,159 deaths.
- [WI Department of Health Services](#) reports 80,300 cases, 71,153 (88.6%) recovered, 6,048 (7.5%) ever hospitalized, and 1,168 (1.5%) deaths. The seven day average of the percent of positive is 9.5%. Refer to [state summary date and county level data](#).
- [Marathon County](#), reports 810 cases, 701 (86.5%) recovered, 64 (7.9%) ever hospitalized, and 14 deaths (1.7%). 18,128 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 22% 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.



WI Department of Health Services has Marathon County’s [COVID-19 activity level](#) as high, being high since 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.

COVID-19 Activity Level Marathon County on 9/2/2020	Low
	Medium
	High

Individuals, businesses, and other entities can reduce their risk for exposure by practicing physically distancing and avoid large gatherings, wear a 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.

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 recent weeks, 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 30,

[Operational Considerations for Schools](#)

[What to do if a Student Becomes Sick at School or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis Flowchart](#)

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

[About COVID-19](#)

[Children and Teens](#)

[Operating schools during COVID-19: CDC’s Considerations](#)

[COVID-19 Forecasts: Hospitalizations](#)

[Coronavirus Self-Checker](#)

[Federal Register Notice: Temporary Halt in Residential Evictions to Prevent the Further Spread of COVID-19](#)

[Businesses and Workplaces](#)  
[Worker Safety and Support](#)  
[COVID-19 Forecasts: Deaths](#)  
[What Hotel, Resort, and Lodge Workers Need to Know about COVID-19](#)  
[COVID-19 Employer Information for Hotels, Resorts, and Lodges](#)  
[COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Country](#)  
[Cases in the U.S.](#)

On September 1, the National Institutes of Health issued statement [The COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines Panel's Statement on the Emergency Use Authorization of Convalescent Plasma for the Treatment of COVID-19](#)

On September 2, NPR published [CDC Asks States To Plan For Potential Vaccine Distribution Starting In Late October](#)

## Wisconsin

On August 31, Channel 3000 published [Dr. Deborah Birx meets with Gov. Evers, health professionals to discuss Wisconsin's fight against COVID-19](#)

On August 31, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [Exact Sciences wins regulatory approval for home COVID-19 tests; home test must be ordered by clinician, then sent to lab for analysis](#)

On August 31, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [UW seeks 2,000 people for Phase III clinical trial of potential COVID-19 vaccine](#)

On August 31, Newsweek published [In-person voting in Wisconsin 'low risk activity', no 'detectable surge' in coronavirus cases, study shows](#)

On August 31, the New York Times published [US coronavirus rates are rising fast among children](#)

On August 31, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [Dr. Deborah Birx touts masks in Wisconsin](#)

On September 1, the La Crosse Tribune published [Avoid Labor Day parties, White House COVID-19 adviser says in Madison](#)

On September 1, the WI Department of Health Services released [Clarification Regarding Admissions to Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities](#)

On September 1, the WI Department of Transportation released [DMV expands services throughout Wisconsin](#)

On September 1, the WI Department of Health Services released [COVID-19 Testing Update](#)

On September 2, Wisconsin Public Radio published [FEMA approves Wisconsin's request to boost unemployment payments by \\$300 a week, but DWD says tens of thousands eligible likely won't see money until October](#)

On September 2, the New York Times published [Steroids can be lifesaving for COVID-19 patients, scientist report](#). New data in hand, the [WHO recommended](#) that doctors give the drugs to critically ill patients worldwide

On September 2, WIAA released [Schools declare for fall or alternative fall sports season](#)

On September 3, [Gov. Evers Announces Additional CARES Act Funds for Early Child Care and Education](#)

On September 3, [Gov. Evers Announces \\$5 million COVID-19 Cultural Organization Grant Program](#)

On September 3, WI Department of Health Services released [DHS Opens Second Round of Applications for Funds to Support Health Care Providers Affected by COVID-19](#)

On September 3, the Wausau Daily Herald published [‘We’re not doing enough tests,’ Wisconsin official says as state reports 727 more COVID-19 cases](#)

On September 3, the FOX 11 News published [Following federal government guidance, Wisconsin preparing to look at vaccine distribution](#)

On September 3, WSAU published [DHS Secretary: Mask order is working in Wisconsin](#)

On September 4, WI Department of Health Services released [Update Guidance for Providing On-Site Hair Salon and Barber Services in Nursing Homes and Assisted-Living Facilities](#)

On September 4, WI Department of Health Services released [New Data Dashboard COVID-19 Trends by Age Group](#)

On September 4, [Governor Evers and State Public Health Officials Encourages Residents to Wear a Mask and Limit Exposure Ahead of Labor Day Weekend](#). Over 20% of confirmed cases associated with group gatherings.

## Actions Marathon County is Taking

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. Marathon County’s target for September 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 9 active facility outbreaks to ensure best practices are in place to control further spread, having 55 facility outbreaks since April 7
- Follow-up on 21,470 negative, positive, or contacts to cases reported from March 1- September 6, 2020, an increase of 1,024 in the past week. Negative reports have been processed and imported into the state database thru September 4.
- Trained 3 new contracted employees, having 25 contracted employees carrying out disease investigation and contact tracing activities or support tasks

#### 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 442 calls from businesses or business related questions since March 25, having 7 calls during the week of August 30
- 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 2 area businesses/organizations regarding Wisconsin's requirement for face coverings. Received 44 complaints the week of August 30 for a total of 559 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 – Translated school testing resources for distribution
  - o Hmong – Shared Hmong Resource Line with the Hmong American Center. Interviewed on Hmong Radio regarding returning to schools (testing/face coverings) and the Hmong Resource Line
  - o Plain Clothes – Mailed testing and symptom management protocols, in-person class checklist, case count data and evaluation of mailing content
- Provide accurate, timely and consistent information via [Marathon County Health Department website](#)
  - o [Dashboard updated](#) to provide death and hospitalization demographics

- Inform the community via [Marathon County Health Department Facebook](#)
  - o Posts: 22, Shares: 61, New Followers: 18 for week of August 31
  - o Posts: 661, Shares: 7,034, Followers: 4,676 since March 1
- Issued 1 press release, conducted 3 interviews and 3 media contacts during the week of August 31; for a total of 34 press releases and 170 interviews/contact with the media since March 1
- Field 68 calls from the general public during the week of August 31

## 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.