

Marathon County Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Situational Report October 12, 2020

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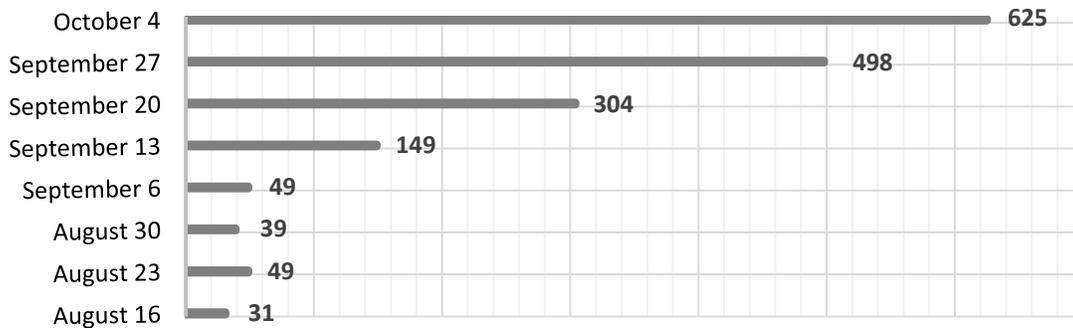
What we Know

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.

For the week of ending on October 10,

- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) reports 7,641,501 cases in the U.S. and 213,037 deaths.
- [WI Department of Health Services](#) reports 147,560 cases in WI, 117,865 (79.9%) recovered, 8,319 (5.6%) ever hospitalized, and 1,458 (1%) deaths. The seven day average of the percent of positive is 17.6%. Total [hospital bed utilization](#) in WI is 83.1%. Refer to [state summary date and county level data](#). Wisconsin ranked third in the U.S. for the number of new cases in the last 7 days, following Texas (No. 1) and California (No. 2).
- [Marathon County](#) reports 2,435 cases, 1,172 (50.3%) recovered, 145 (6%) ever hospitalized, and 30 deaths (1.2%). 22,510 residents have tested negative for COVID-19. The fourteen day average of percent of positive is 12.2%. Total bed utilization in the North Central region is 77.8%. Refer to [Marathon County COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Number of New Cases in Marathon County by Week



WI Department of Health Services has Marathon County's [COVID-19 activity level](#) as very high. The activity level is based on the number of new cases in the past two weeks and percent change from the previous to the current week.

COVID-19 Activity Level Marathon County 10/7/2020	<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Low</div>	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.
	<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Medium</div>	
	<div style="background-color: orange; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">High</div>	
	<div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Very High</div>	

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 is critical in keeping schools and businesses open.

Harm reduction behaviors are actions everyone can take to reduce their risk in 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.



Marathon County continues to see a steep surge of COVID-19 positive cases. As result, the demand for testing has strained our health care systems. The Marathon County Health Department has implemented the WI Department of Health Services Contact Tracing Crisis Standards, having schools and employers do notification of contacts. Residents waiting for a call or letter with isolation guidance are being advised to isolate at home and inform those who had close contact.

Major Developments

U.S.

CDC updates for the week of October 4,

- [CDC Updates “How COVID is Spread” Webpage Media Statement - How COVID-19 Spreads Considerations for Institutions of Higher Education](#)
- [Scientific Brief: SARS-CoV-2 and Potential Airborne Transmission](#)
- [COVID-19 Forecasts: Hospitalizations](#)
- [People with Certain Medical Conditions](#)
- [Travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [COVID-19 Science Update released: October 6, 2020](#)
- [Alcohol and Substance Use](#)
- [Travelers Returning from Cruise Ship and River Cruise](#)
- [COVID-19 Forecasts: Deaths](#)

[Case Series of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Adults Associated with SARS-CoV-2 Infections – United Kingdom and United States, March-August 2020](#)
[Adolescent with COVID-19 as the Source of an Outbreak at a 3-Week Family Gathering – Four States, June – July 2020](#)
[Trends in COVID-19 Incidence After Implementation of Mitigation Measures – Arizona, January 22 – August 7, 2020](#)
[Characteristics Associated with Adults Remembering to Wash Hands in Multiple Situations Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, October 2019 and June 2020](#)
[Investigating the Impact of COVID-19 during Pregnancy Cases in the U.S.](#)
[Transmission Dynamics by Age Group in COVID-19 Hotspot Counties – United States, April – September 2020](#)
[Factors Influencing Risk for COVID-19 Exposure Among Young Adults Aged 18 – 23 Years – Winnebago County, Wisconsin, March – July 2020](#)

Wisconsin

On October 2, PBS Wisconsin Here and Now posted [Health Secretary on COVID Surge](#)

On October 2, Wisconsin Examiner published [Lt. Gov. Barnes: To Stop the spread, change our behavior](#)

On October 3, LaCrosse Tribune published [Public invited to weigh in on coronavirus vaccine allocation proposal from Wisconsin’s Ethics Subcommittee](#)

On October 3, CNBC published [Coronavirus hospitalizations grow in the Midwest amid climbing cases – ‘It’s clearly a forest fire’](#)

On October 3, Arts Wisconsin released [We’re All In Creative Workforce Program](#)

On October 4, Governor Evers proclaims October 4, 2020 as [COVID Remembrance Day throughout the State of Wisconsin](#)

On October 5, WI Department of Health Services published [CMP Grants Available to Federally Certified Nursing Homes for in-Person Visitation Aids](#)

On October 5, Governor Evers [Announces nearly \\$50 million in COVID19 Support for Wisconsinites](#), \$47 million includes support for child care, healthcare navigators, food security, and energy and rental assistance

On October 5, Wisconsin Public Radio published [State Epidemiologist: Local Health Departments ‘Cracking Under the Strain’ Of Coronavirus Spread](#)

On October 5, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published [Less than 2% of Wisconsinites have coronavirus antibodies, preliminary results from study show](#)

On October 6, Secretary-designee Palm issued [Emergency Order #3, Limiting Public Gatherings](#) which limits public gatherings statewide to no more than 25% of a room or a building total occupancy.

On October 6, WI Department of Health Services posted [Change in 7-day average for new cases in 1 month](#)

On October 6, 2 FIRST ALERT WBAY.com published [Packers: No fans at home games for an indefinite amount of time](#)

On October 6, Reuters published [Six U.S. states report record COVID hospitalizations, new restrictions in place](#)

On October 7, [Due to Increased Hospitalizations in the Fox Valley, Gov. Evers Announces Wisconsin State Fair Park Alternative Care Facility to Accept COVID-19 Patients October 14](#)

On October 7, the Wisconsin State Journal published [Another Wisconsin prison has massive COVID-19 outbreak; more than 300 cases reported](#)

On October 7, WMTV NBC 15.com published [DHS: COVID-19 hospitalizations skyrocketing, especially South Central Wisconsin](#)

On October 7, WMTV NBC 15.com published Marquette poll [Wisconsinites worry more this month about getting “seriously ill” from COVID-19](#)

On October 7, 7 WSAW-TV published [Wisconsin begins looking to out-of-state health care workers to help with staffing shortages](#)

On October 8, the Wisconsin State Journal published [First COVID-19-related deaths confirmed in Wisconsin prison system](#)

On October 8, 2 FIRST ALERT WBAY.com published [CDC studying UW-Oshkosh’s use of COVID-19 antigen testing](#)

On October 8, WMTV NBC 15.com published [Legislative agency critical of indoor gatherings orders says it’s still ‘enforceable’](#)

On October 8, the Wisconsin State Farmer published [DNR confirms dead mink on Taylor County farm tested positive for COVID-19](#)

On October 9, the Wisconsin State Journal published [Wisconsin sets another COVID-19 record, reporting 3,132 new cases](#)

On October 9, prominent Wisconsin health care, business organizations unveil efforts to slow pandemic spread [“Stop the COVID Spread!”](#)

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

- Implemented WI Department of Health Services Contact Tracing Crisis Standards given the number of cases has exceeded the health department’s resources. Notification of close contacts is being carried out by schools, businesses, and other entities. WI Department of Health Services Contact Tracing Team is assisting in disease investigation, contact tracing, and close contact notification.
- 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. October testing target for Marathon County is a minimum of 1,300 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,

- Establish community testing programs for symptomatic individuals in target communities, and
- Ensure everyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms gets a test.

For the time period of September 23 – October 6, the percent positive was 12.2% for a total of 6,998 tests done during this two week time period.

- 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, hosting call among providers and partners on October 10
- Follow-up on 69 active facility outbreaks to ensure best practices are in place to control further spread, having 123 facility outbreaks since April 7
- Follow-up 1,651 negative, positive, or contacts to cases reported during the week, for a total of 28,989 from March 1- October 10, 2020. Negative reports have been processed and imported into the WI Electronic Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) database thru September 28, having 6,000 records to process. WEDSS, scheduled for upgrade October 16-18, will process and import negative tests automatically after the upgrade is in place.
- Provide oversight to 30 contracted employees who are 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
- Provide a weekly report to area schools on recommendations for mitigation and control measures and COVID-19 activity in the county; field questions from schools and provide recommendations based on local school conditions; held Health Officer Open Line with area school administrators on October 8 to provide an update on local conditions and implications for schools
- Promote the Wausau Area Chamber of Commerce [Consumer Safety Pledge](#) initiative. Kept the Wausau Area Chamber of Commerce abreast of surge of cases and impact on contact tracing and notification for area businesses/organizations
- Field 487 calls from businesses or business related questions since March 25, having 24 calls during the week of October 4
 - Provide information and resources to area businesses/organizations regarding Wisconsin's requirement for face covering. Received 32 [complaints](#) the week of October 4 for a total of 764 since the on-line form was made available on August 13
 - Provide information to area businesses/organizations regarding Wisconsin's requirement limiting public gatherings issued on October 6, 2020

Health Care System Response

- Monitor regional availability of health care resources for the COVID-19 response
- 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
- Further efforts to secure a dedicated testing site with the National Guard in the Wausau area to provide surge capacity for health care systems; support the establishment of a dedicated testing site in the Curtiss area with Clark County Health Department

Communication

- Outreach efforts to populations:
 - o Plain Clothes – Mailed guidance on Emergency Order #3, Limiting Public Gatherings; prevention strategies; and weekly data summary
- Provide accurate, timely and consistent information via [Marathon County Health Department website](#)
- Inform the community via [Marathon County Health Department Facebook](#)
 - o Posts: 26, Shares: 255, New Followers: 88 for week of October 4
 - o Posts: 774, Shares: 8,325, Followers: 5,049 since March 1
- Issued 1 press release and conducted 3 interviews during the week of October 4; for a total of 41 press releases and 201 interviews/contact with the media since March 1
- Field 237 calls from the general public during the week of October 4

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.

Spend more time at home.

Stay home if sick. Get tested if you have symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19.

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

Get a flu shot.

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.