

Highlights of COVID Legislation

All provisions are assumed to have a deadline of the conclusion of a national emergency declared by the U.S. president in response to the 2019 novel coronavirus or June 30th, whichever is earlier, unless otherwise noted.

Providing the Governor with the tools to slow the spread

- \$100 million in funding for COVID-19*
- Collection and reporting of public health emergency data - public health dashboard (Act 185)
 - During any outbreak of a communicable disease (not just during COVID-related outbreaks as in Act 185)

Making sure Wisconsinites have access to necessary medication, COVID tests, and vaccines

- Extending the elimination of copayments for COVID tests and vaccines (Act 185 - vaccines are new addition)*
- Allowing for early refills of prescription drugs (Act 185)*
- Authorizing pharmacists to extend needed prescription orders without doctor authorization (Act 185)*
- Coverage for out-of-network providers and protection for patients from surprise bills (Act 185)*
- Coverage for vaccinations under SeniorCare (Act 185)*
 - Permanent

Providing support to our hospitals dealing with COVID surges and building up workforce capacity and other critical areas in need

- Providing MA reimbursements for hospitals, aligning with Medicare:
 - Reimbursements for hospitals who are providing skilled nursing facility (SNF) beds to patients who cannot return to a nursing home*
 - Reimbursements for hospital outpatient procedures that have been moved to another facility to free up space for COVID patients*
 - Reimbursements for swing beds - an option hospitals can use to create more space for COVID patients*
- Permanently allowing out-of-state health providers to start practicing in this state more quickly to help fill workforce shortages on the front lines, as well as through telehealth (Act 185)*
 - Now permanent
- Rehiring retirees in critical positions (Act 185)*
 - 60 days after bill or end of national emergency
- Enable Wisconsin hospitals to participate in the recently announced CMS Hospital at Home Program which provides alternative hospital care options for patients in their home
 - Tied to CMS program length

*Governor's bill

- Allowing deaths that have been labeled as COVID to be cremated within the 48 hour requirement to include inmates (Act 185)*
 - Ends with national emergency declared by president
- Liability insurance for physicians and nurse anesthetists (Act 185)*
- Provide hospitals with information to improve Medicaid patient outcomes and help analyze the impacts of COVID-19
 - Permanent
- Allow ambulances to travel across state lines to provide patient services
 - Ends June 30, 2021

Creating an "all-hands-on-deck" approach to vaccinations

- Allowing pharmacy students to utilize their training to provide vaccinations - regardless of their level in school - and ensuring they get reimbursed for their administration of COVID tests and vaccines*
 - Permanent
- Allowing dentists to administer COVID and flu vaccines
 - Permanent
- Creating a temporary, voluntary license to ensure distribution of vaccines from a local facility*
 - Ends when FDA establishes their licensing program

Ensuring families can safely visit their loved ones in nursing homes and assisted living facilities to provide needed support for those struggling in isolation

- Aligning with CMS guidance to allow a resident to label someone as an "essential visitor" so they may enter the nursing home to assist with things like emotional distress or weight loss due to lack of family support

Protecting Wisconsinites from government overreach during a difficult time

- Legislative oversight of any new COVID dollars
 - Ends June 30th 2021
- Creating liability laws to ensure good actors are protected from frivolous lawsuits
 - Permanent
- Prohibiting employers, DHS, and local health officers from mandating the vaccine
 - Permanent
- Local health officers may only close or restrict capacity of a business for 14 days after which the local governing unit must vote to continue the decision. The vote must be by 2/3rds of the members and it must occur every 14 days for the order to continue
 - Permanent
- Local public health officers and DHS may not close places of worship
 - Permanent
- Governor must provide a plan to reopen state buildings and return employees to work
 - By January 31, 2021
- Legislative oversight of federal dollars for the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant for child welfare services
 - Permanent

*Governor's bill

Providing parents with options and stability to ensure their children receive the best education in the safest environment

- Easing the open enrollment process so if a student is accepted by a neighboring school district they may transfer until end of school year 2022
- WIAA must allow students who attend a virtual charter to participate in athletics in their resident school district
 - Permanent
- WIAA must allow a student who has transferred to another school to participate in sports until of school year 2022
- Requiring school boards to vote every 14 days on their decision to go virtual until June 30th, 2022
- Requiring a school who has gone virtual to report to the legislature every semester they are not in person until 2021-2022

Requiring DWD to eliminate the UI backlog

- Governor must provide a plan to address claims backlog by January 31st - returning to February 2020 numbers*
- Extend call center hours to 12 hours a day seven days a week until numbers return to January and February 2020 levels
- Continuing work-share programs (Act 185)*
 - Ends July 4th, 2021
- Continuing one week waiting periods (Act 185)
 - Ends March 14, 2021
- UI - Benefit charging (Act 185)
 - Ends March 13, 2021

Providing relief during a difficult time

- Allowing BCPL to offer loans to ensure that a municipal utility is able to maintain liquidity (Act 185)*
 - Ends April 15, 2021
- A dwelling unit may be occupied prior to an inspection and granted an occupancy permit if the dwelling unit later passes final inspection
 - No deadline
- A person who has received a covered approval relating to challenged permit or challenge plat or survey may obtain a term or duration extension
 - No deadline
- Local taxable districts may waive any interest charges and penalties for late payments received before October 1, 2021 (Act 185)
- Claims to recover property taxes do not require property tax payment until October 1, 2021