

COVID-19 BACKGROUND (current as of March 30, 2020)

NOTE: The information herein is current as of 7:00 p.m. on March 30, 2020, but please know that as this is a rapidly evolving situation; there will continue to be updates and changes. This document includes all of the information the governor's office provided on March 28, 2020 in addition to updates occurring since then. New information is highlighted.

COVID-19 OVERVIEW

COVID-19 is a virus that has not previously infected humans and information about its rate of spread and its effects is still largely unknown, which makes it incredibly important to be highly cautious in dealing with the current situation. On March 11th, the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Here's an update on the work done so far, the current status of COVID-19 in Wisconsin, and the steps being taken to keep families and communities safe.

Please continue to find the most current information on the [DHS website](#), which has guidance that is updated regularly for travel, self-quarantine, and school districts, among other important information. We have also created a new site that houses resources to help direct folks to resources at our state agencies. Please share this website widely as well: wisconsin.gov/covid19.

As of today, March 30th, there have been 1,221 people who tested positive for COVID-19, and 14 confirmed deaths due to COVID-19 in Wisconsin. Gov. Evers, the Department of Health Services (DHS), and the State agencies are taking this issue very seriously and precautions are being taken across Wisconsin. Gov. Evers, his administration, and staff have also been working with partners at the local and federal levels to provide the most accurate, up-to-date information possible.

We are seeing community spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. This means that there are people who have tested positive who have no exposures to a known case nor did they travel to a location where there is known community spread. Staying home and using social distancing will help keep you, your family, and our community from increased risk of exposure.

On March 17th, the DHS and Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene to move to tiered COVID-19 testing to manage capacity. The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) significantly increasing their capacity for COVID-19 testing, the number of testing specimens being received far exceeds their daily capacity. In order to conserve supplies for testing, WSLH and DHS are now prioritizing two tiers of cases for testing:

Tier One (Individuals who):

- are critically ill and receiving ICU level care with unexplained viral pneumonia or respiratory failure
- are hospitalized (non-ICU) with fever or signs and symptoms of lower respiratory tract illness (cough, shortness of breath) and either known exposure to a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient or travel to an area with sustained community transmission

Tier Two (Individuals who):

- are hospitalized (non-ICU) with unexplained fever and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory tract illness
- are health care workers with unexplained fever and signs/symptoms of a lower-respiratory illness, regardless of hospitalization

Test requests that do not meet these criteria will be sent to other labs in the state and country for testing, resulting in longer wait times. Patients without symptoms and patients with mild upper respiratory symptoms who are not health care workers should not be tested in order to ensure that there is capacity to test ill people.

On March 30th, Gov. Evers announced a new public-private partnership among Wisconsin industry leaders to increase Wisconsin's laboratory testing capacity for COVID-19. The new partnership now includes laboratory support from Exact Sciences, Marshfield Clinic Health System, Promega, and UW Health. These organizations, along with the Wisconsin Clinical Lab Network, will now share knowledge, resources, and technology to bolster Wisconsin's testing capacity. The Wisconsin Clinical Lab Network labs have been averaging completion of 1,500-2,000 COVID-19 tests per day. The expanded capacity from the state's new public-private partnership is expected to double that capacity initially and continue to expand as additional platforms and supplies become available. Residents who are seeking a COVID-19 test are still required to receive an order from a doctor. These labs are not testing sites.

The DHS hosts near-daily informational briefings that are streamed live both on WisconsinEye and via the DHS YouTube account. The briefings typically feature DHS Secretary-designee Palm and Dr. Ryan Westergaard, Chief Medical Officer of the Bureau of Communicable Diseases, among others. The governor has also been joining these briefings in addition to others when appropriate, including Wisconsin National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp. Members of the press participate in these briefings and ask questions. You are more than welcome—and encouraged—to tune into these briefings to ensure that you are receiving all of the information being made available by our administration.

The DHS will continue to hold regular informational briefings for members of the media as has been the case for the past several weeks to help ensure the most accurate and up-to-date information is consistently reported out to the public.

UPDATE ON EVERS ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS

Earlier this month, Gov. Evers directed the DHS to provide the public and legislators from across the state an informational briefing and to give an update on the status of COVID-19. On March 13th, the governor again directed the DHS to provide an updated informational briefing (via webinar) for legislators to occur on March 18th. Over the past few weeks, the DHS has also hosted regular informational calls to provide updates to members of the media so we can ensure folks across our state are receiving the most current information we have available. In addition to the FAQ sections below, please feel free to consult the question and answer section of these briefings during which Gov. Evers and Sec.-designee Palm, among others, answer questions from members of the press.

Gov. Evers has also participated in discussions with Vice President Mike Pence and senior administration officials to receive updates on the White House Coronavirus Task Force and to share how Wisconsin and other states are responding to COVID-19. Addressing public health issues like COVID-19 requires collaboration and communication to ensure efforts are efficient and effective. Members of Gov. Evers' administration have been in regular contact with other elected officials and partners at the local, state, and federal levels, and are continuing to work together on preventing and responding to COVID-19. On March 14th, Gov. Evers sent a letter to U.S. Sens. Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin requesting their support for the bipartisan legislation moving through Congress that will provide free coronavirus testing, paid emergency leave, bolsters food security programs, and enhances unemployment insurance, among other important initiatives to help support our state's efforts to respond to COVID-19.

Making sure that folks have access to the healthcare resources, care, and treatment they need is critically important in working to manage the spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. On March 6th, Gov. Evers and Insurance Commissioner Mark Afable asked health plan issuers to help Wisconsinites access testing and treatment for COVID-19 and to ensure that healthcare is as accessible as possible as we continue to monitor this situation.

Gov. Evers and Commissioner Afable requested that health plan issuers waive cost-sharing for COVID-19-related laboratory testing and radiology services, prepare for increased demand for telehealth services, review readiness and responsiveness plans to new COVID-19 cases, and that health plan issuers cover the immunization for COVID-19—in the event that an immunization becomes available—at no cost-sharing for covered members. They also asked that health plan issuers be flexible on prescription drug supply limitations and early refill limitations so folks can get their medication as quickly as possible and without worrying about increased exposure or risk.

In addition to helping ensure folks have access to healthcare, on March 23rd, the governor directed Commissioner Afable to support restaurants and workers across Wisconsin who are offering delivery and pickup services. Insurers must cover delivery services for restaurants on personal auto insurance policies and must offer coverage for hired drivers and non-owned automobiles as a rider on a restaurant's general liability insurance if it is requested, both at no extra cost to the policyholders. Restaurants interested in this coverage should contact their insurance agent or insurance company directly.

Additionally, with the COVID-19 public health emergency requiring non-essential businesses to close, many employees working for small employers may be furloughed or work fewer than 30 hours per week. On March 26th, Gov. Evers directed Commissioner Afable also called on insurers to give small employers the option to keep employees who are furloughed or working fewer than 30 hours per week on employer-sponsored health insurance. The 30-hour workweek provision under Wisconsin's small employer law is a minimum standard. Insurers and employer policyholders can agree to offer coverage to employees working fewer than 30 hours if the offer is made to all employees of the employer and is not made in an unfairly discriminatory manner. The bulletin is effective for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Office of the Commissioner of Insurance is also urging insurers to work with small employers to provide the option of continuing dental, vision, and prescription drug benefits when those are offered as separate policies.

On March 26th, our administration issued guidance for essential businesses during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The guidance includes information about business interruption insurance from the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) and business loans and grants from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). An FAQs document regarding business interruption insurance is available [here](#). OCI also encourages anyone who believes they have been improperly denied coverage to visit <http://ociaccess.oci.wi.gov/complaints/public/> for more information about their complaint process.

The governor and our office have also been working with U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin to help secure federal funding to support our efforts in responding to COVID-19 in Wisconsin. On March 11th, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that Wisconsin would be receiving more than \$10.2 million to support our response and prevention efforts for COVID-19. Gov. Evers and his administration are working quickly to determine how to best allocate these resources toward prevention and response across our state.

On March 21st, Gov. Evers directed Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) to ask the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist Wisconsin in obtaining protective medical supplies

that can be used by law enforcement officers and firefighters who are at risk of direct exposure to COVID-19 while performing their jobs. FEMA is being asked to help Wisconsin obtain 50,000 non-surgical masks, 10,000 face shields, 11,000 coveralls, 3,000 N95 face masks, and 35,000 pairs of protective gloves through its procurement process. The request comes in addition to the state's ongoing efforts to obtain personal protective equipment (PPE) from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

As of March 26th, the state has received about 104,680 N95 respirators, 260,840 face/surgical masks, 48,168 face shields, 40,512 surgical gowns, 192 coveralls, and 70,375 pairs of gloves from the SNS. The state has also requested assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with purchasing supplies for use by first responders. On March 26th, the governor sent a letter to FEMA formally requesting additional testing supplies so that state and private labs in Wisconsin are able to test for COVID-19 at capacity and requested that FEMA work to support and enhance expanded production of these supplies through their manufacturers. Gov. Evers also expressed his concern about reports that PPE, testing reagent, and other critical supplies are being redirected from Midwest states to the federal government and expressed that states are best positioned to appropriately deploy these scarce resources.

On March 28th, Gov. Evers again wrote to FEMA to request an expedited processing of resource requests for additional lab testing supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) for first responders and health care workers. The governor also expressed appreciation for FEMA's efforts to fulfill requests for PPE from the SNS but that materials received to-date remain insufficient to address need in Wisconsin. This letter was in response to information we received that Wisconsin's order was being moved down the priority list.

Our office continues to work with Wisconsin's federal delegation on obtaining these additional supplies as requested from FEMA. On March 30th, U.S. Sen. Baldwin sent a letter signed by the entire Wisconsin congressional delegation advocating asking for expedited processing of Wisconsin's requests. A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

On March 11th, state agency employees also received an update on COVID-19 in Wisconsin and its effects on our workforce. On March 12th, Gov. Evers signed [Executive Order #72](#) declaring a public health emergency in Wisconsin and hosted a press conference giving an update to the people of Wisconsin about COVID-19. Executive Order #72 directs the DHS to take all necessary and appropriate measures to prevent and respond to incidents of COVID-19 in Wisconsin, and suspends any administrative rules that the DHS finds would increase the health threat or prevent, hinder, or delay our response to the COVID-19 emergency. It also directs the Adjutant General of the Wisconsin National Guard to assist in our response to the public health emergency. Additionally, the DHS also issued new guidance regarding mass gatherings, travel, and long-term care and assisted living facilities. Please see the [DHS website](#) for these updates.

The DHS announced new guidance on telehealth on March 30th. The new guidance provides that Medicaid will temporarily cover all currently covered services to be provided via telehealth using real-time technology as long as the service can be delivered with functional equivalence to the face-to-face service. This includes audio-only phone communication if necessary. This applies to all service areas and all enrolled professional and paraprofessional providers allowable within current ForwardHealth coverage policy. Further, paraprofessionals subject to supervision requirements are allowed to hold supervision via telehealth. The DHS' guidance can be found [here](#).

Ensuring the people of Wisconsin have continued utility access is critically important to ensure folks have access to basic necessities as the state continues plans to prevent further spread of COVID-19 through promoting social distancing, mandating school closures, etc. Thus, following the governor's public health

emergency declaration, the Wisconsin Public Service Commission [directed](#) water, electric, and natural gas utilities to cease disconnecting residential service for nonpayment and also directed utilities reconnect services to dwellings that had been disconnected until the state public health emergency is lifted.

Working to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is a top priority, especially as it relates to limiting potential exposure at correctional facilities and putting other inmates at risk. Thus, on March 13th, the Department of Corrections (DOC) announced it is taking extra precautions by temporarily suspending visits at all DOC institutions in an effort to protect correctional workers and staff and the individuals who are in the DOC's care. A copy of DOC's announcement can be found [here](#). The DOC also announced they are temporarily waiving \$7 co-pay for individuals experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath to receive medical treatment.

On March 20th, Gov. Evers ordered DOC to implement a moratorium on admissions to the state prisons and DOC juvenile facilities to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. These restrictions go into effect on Monday, March 23rd and will be re-evaluated as updated information becomes available. Certain essential transfers will continue. This order does not affect the ability of courts to sentence individuals to prison, but means that they will be held in a county jail facility in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to our large facilities. Additionally, all transfers from state contracted county jail beds have been suspended until further notice to ensure everyone's safety.

The DOC takes the responsibility to protect staff and persons in their care seriously and continues to work with state and federal partners on best practices. The DOC will continue to review the necessity of the order and will work with county partners to discuss any potential modification that may be necessary.

Gov. Evers also directed the DHS to close all Wisconsin K-12 schools—both public and private—as part of the state's ongoing efforts to respond to and contain the spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. The mandated closure was effective at the end of the school day on March 18th. Gov. Evers announced on March 17th that schools will be closed for the duration of the public health emergency, indefinitely extending the previously announced April 6th resumption date. A copy of the DHS' order can be found [here](#). The governor's office has received several inquiries from educators, parents, education stakeholders, and legislators about the order and its implications. To help provide answers, the governor's office has prepared a list of frequently asked questions and answers below. You can also find additional information on the Department of Public Instruction's (DPI) [website](#).

K-12 SCHOOL CLOSURE FAQs	
Can schools close before Wednesday?	Schools districts, particularly those in counties with reported cases of COVID-19, may choose to close earlier than Wednesday, March 18 th . The CDC has issued guidance for schools to consider when making this decision: Considerations for School Closure .
Where can I find out if schools will stay closed after April 6?	Governor Evers and the Department of Health Services (DHS) will continue to put out the latest information on social media, as well as issuing media releases to ensure the public is aware of the latest decisions and guidance. Additionally, the DPI will continue to share information with schools around the state. Families should also look for information from their local schools, who may also make decisions related to additional closures.
Can schools do virtual learning?	Yes. The order does not prevent a school from providing virtual instruction to pupils. The DPI provided information and resources to school districts who plan to use virtual learning time as allowed under the state administrative code provisions.
Will the required instruction hours be modified?	Districts have the ability to request a waiver from the DPI regarding hours of instruction. Whether school closures are mandated by the state or locally determined due to COVID-19, the DPI will address the issue of waivers based on the severity and length of the situation. The DPI has stated they will be

<p>empathetic to the ability of a district to reasonably meet the hours requirement. The DPI does not yet know the impact of closures or their length. The DPI will do whatever they can to expedite the process surrounding waivers and meet the needs of school districts.</p>
<p>How will students who qualify for free or reduced lunch be supported during the closure? State and federal leaders are working to identify ways to support serving children meals during periods of school closures due to COVID-19. As a resource, the DPI has developed a webpage for options for serving children meals in a non-congregate setting in the event of a school closure due to COVID-19.</p> <p>The DPI submitted a Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) waiver to USDA. This request is to waive the congregate feeding requirement for SFSP meals during unanticipated school closures at school and non-school sites during a public health emergency, such as COVID-19. The waiver is for all SFSP sponsors in good standing in the state. The public notice informing the public about the proposed waiver is posted at https://dpi.wi.gov/community-nutrition/sfsp.</p>
<p>What supports are available for students with an IEP? The federal Department of Education (ED) issued new resources around protecting student privacy and addressing questions regarding serving students with disabilities during the COVID-19 outbreak. If a school is closed for an extended period of time (generally, more than 10 consecutive school days) and educational services are not provided to other students, then services are not required for students with disabilities during the closure. Once school resumes, local educational agencies must make every effort to implement individualized education plans, and should consider, on an individualized basis, whether and to what extent compensatory services are required due to the closure. If a school provides services through virtual learning, the school must ensure students with disabilities have equal access to the same opportunities, and that to the greatest extent possible, special education and related services are provided. Once school resumes, local educational agencies must make every effort to implement individualized education plans, and should consider, on an individualized basis, whether and to what extent compensatory services are required due to the closure.</p>
<p>Will school playgrounds be open? Individual districts or schools will make determinations about access to school grounds. In doing so, they should follow recommendations and guidance from the CDC, Department of Health Services, and local public health officials. However, school grounds and facilities cannot be used for instructional purposes or for extracurricular activities. This includes athletics practices or other extracurriculars that regularly occur on school grounds.</p>
<p>What are the implications for state testing/assessments? U.S. Department of Education (ED) indicates their goal is for all states to meet the assessment requirements under section 1111(b)(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The DPI asked each of its assessment vendors to determine whether the assessment windows can be extended. The DPI is working with these vendors to identify the feasibility of this option and will relay information to districts as soon as it becomes available. Please know the DPI is actively exploring all options, including a waiver, from ED if closures prevent statewide testing.</p>
<p>What are the implications for childcare/extended day programs? The order only applies to pupil instruction and extracurricular activities, not to childcare functions. For programs run in school buildings, school leaders will make determinations regarding childcare or extended day programs, and families should look to their local provider for the latest information. Early Care and Education providers participating in 3K and 4K programs offsite may continue to serve those children in their child care setting at their discretion.</p>
<p>Are all athletics and club sports canceled? The order requires all K-12 school buildings to be closed to extracurricular activities. If your child is involved in athletics or extra-curriculars that regularly take place in a non-school building, you should contact the provider organization regarding cancellations and follow DHS guidance regarding social distancing.</p>
<p>Will student graduations be affected? This closure order currently only extends through April 6; however, the current public health emergency is a rapidly evolving situation, and we will be reassessing our recommendations and requirements for schools on an ongoing basis in order to protect the health of students, educators, staff, and the public. Districts may also make independent determinations about their planned events. Please look for updates from both the DHS and local schools and districts.</p>
<p>What conversations should parents have with their children at home? The DPI recommends the following resource: Talking to Children about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) - A Parent Resource.</p>

Does the order prohibit school staff from reporting to work?

No. The order only applies to pupil instruction and extracurricular activities, not to other functions. School leaders will make determinations on a case-by-case basis regarding access for other purposes, such as virtual learning, cleaning, food service, payroll and clerical functions. If school facilities are used for other purposes, districts should follow guidance from public health officials to ensure that appropriate health and safety measures are in place.

Will hourly staff be paid?

Gov. Evers recognizes that the closure presents challenges to students, families, educators, staff and districts, including financial impact. Local districts will need to determine how to best address the impacts of closures on hourly staff. Gov. Evers encourage districts and all employers to take whatever steps they can to minimize the economic impact to workers due to public health closures.

On March 20th, the DPI announced it will apply for a waiver from federal requirements to administer statewide assessments to all students to make annual accountability determinations, to identify schools for support and improvement, and to provide data on federal report cards for assessment and accountability information. The announcement comes as the U.S. Department of Education announced flexibility will be provided to all states regarding the assessment and accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as the Every Student Succeeds Act. Our office is continuing to work with the DPI around suspension of state testing and accountability requirements.

Grocery store inventories have been especially affected by COVID-19 as people seek to keep a two-week supply of food and necessities. Consequently, on March 14th, the governor directed the Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue COVID-19 Relief Effort Supply Permits for transporting inventory to grocery retailers affected by COVID-19. The permits allow for additional supplies to be efficiently transported over Wisconsin interstates and most highways and local roadways by increasing weight limits and waiving truck driver hours of service limitations. More information can be found on DOT's website [here](#). The governor has extended this order for the duration of the public health emergency. That [order](#) can be found here.

Gov. Evers has also directed the DOT to ensure continuation of essential services while addressing the issue of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. To continue to meet legal requirements, while protecting the public and staff, the DOT announced that driver licenses and CDLs that expire during this public health emergency will be automatically extended 60 days. Late fees will be waived. The driver record, visible to law enforcement, will show the extension and that the driver license is valid. Additionally, after a one-day closing period that occurred on Friday, March 20th, to allow staff to deep clean service centers, service centers will reopen on Monday, March 23rd, but in-person visits will be restricted to appointments only for the purposes of new drivers licenses or issuing identification cards. To make an appointment, customers can use the Driver License Guide (wisconsin.dmv.gov/DLGuide). They can also use this guide to begin the paperwork and submit it electronically. Customers with questions may call Driver Services at (608) 264-7447.

In addition to declaring a public health emergency, Executive Order #72 also declares that Wisconsin is experiencing a period of "abnormal economic disruption" because of COVID-19. This declaration authorizes the DATCP to enforce Wisconsin's [price gouging statute](#) until the emergency has ended. In addition to price gouging, the DATCP remains the agency charged with investigating scams and other fraudulent trade practices in Wisconsin. If you receive any constituent contacts related to suspected scams, fraud, false marketing claims, price gouging or other consumer complaints related to COVID-19, please refer those contacts to the DATCP's Consumer Protection Hotline at DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov or (800) 422-7128, or have them file an [online complaint](#).

On March 25th, the DATCP issued cease and desist letters to 16 companies suspected of unlawfully raising prices. Among companies who received a cease and desist letter includes a company suspected of price gouging on N95 masks.

As you are likely aware, 38 Wisconsinites were aboard the Grand Princess cruise ship, which was quarantined due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Gov. Evers, the Wisconsin National Guard, and the DHS, in collaboration with partners at the federal level, have been working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the White House to get the necessary information we need to bring these Wisconsinites home as quickly and safely as possible. Through direct outreach by the DHS and calls into the governor's office, we have also learned from passengers and family members concerning reports about conditions and that some passengers have needed medical accommodations. Our team has been working with the HHS to improve conditions and get those accommodations and medications to the passengers as soon as possible.

Initially, the HHS communicated to the governor's office that HHS would transport passengers to Wisconsin at which time the Wisconsin National Guard would transport passengers to their homes for self-isolation. Given the initial lack of details from HHS, on March 13th, Gov. Evers directed the Wisconsin National Guard to instead develop its own plans to go to all five sites to bring these Wisconsinites home. Nearly 30 Soldiers and Airmen from the Wisconsin National Guard were mobilized to state active duty after the governor declared a public health emergency, and they were standing by to transport the passengers upon landing at the National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center in Camp Douglas, Wisconsin.

On March 16th, Gov. Evers announced 29 Wisconsin residents who were aboard the Grand Princess cruise ship were safely transported back to Wisconsin around 4:18 am Monday morning. Two other passengers chose to remain in quarantine in Texas under the custody of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS), citing personal reasons. Upon return, Adjutant General Paul Knapp welcomed the 29 Wisconsinites home on behalf of Gov. Evers. Passengers received a welcome-home packet which included a letter from the governor, information about their 14 days of quarantine, and how to contact their local health department or the DHS with any questions. The governor's office has also provided direct contact information for our constituent services director to assist in providing support and assistance to help ensure passengers' transition and return to Wisconsin is as seamless and safe as possible. Upon landing at the National Guard's Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center in Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, Guard members transported passengers home in state vans.

As of the morning of March 16th, none of the returning 29 Wisconsin citizens have tested positive for COVID-19 and all are asymptomatic, but the residents will follow Center for Disease Control and Wisconsin Department of Health Services protocols and continue to self-quarantine for the requisite 14-day period. The Soldiers and Airmen involved will self-monitor for 14 days upon the conclusion of their mission.

On March 21st, Gov. Evers announced another four Wisconsin residents who were aboard the Grand Princess cruise ship were safely transported back to Wisconsin. Wisconsin National Guard personnel were waiting to transport them back to their homes for self-quarantine. Passengers received a welcome-home packet which included a letter from the governor, information about their 14 days of quarantine, and how to contact their local health department or the DHS with any questions. The governor's office has also provided direct contact information for our constituent services director to assist in providing support and assistance to help ensure passengers' transition and return to Wisconsin is as seamless and safe as possible.

Of the original 38 passengers who are Wisconsin residents (aside from the above mentioned two who chose to remain in Texas) three passengers remain in California and will return back to Wisconsin at a later date: two of the passengers remain in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS), custody in California, and one passenger chose to remain in California citing personal reasons.

On March 19th, the Wisconsin National Guard announced that it has mobilized approximately 300 troops to help provide further state support, if needed. The Wisconsin National Guard's action was pursuant to Gov. Evers' [executive order](#) declaring a state of emergency, at which time he authorized the Adjutant General to activate the Wisconsin National Guard as necessary to help assist the state's response to the public health emergency. See the Wisconsin National Guard's announcement [here](#).

Effective on March 13th, the Wisconsin State Capitol suspended all Capitol tours until further notice. As of March 16th, signage has been posted at all entrances of the Capitol advising against entering if persons are exhibiting symptoms or meet other criteria described. Additionally, on March 14th, the DOA sent out correspondence to state agency employees announcing telecommuting as an option for employees whose job duties are conducive to working from home. Supervisors will approve telecommuting on case-by-case bases. State agencies are otherwise continuing normal operations at this time. The governor's office, the DOA, and the DHS continue to provide guidance for state employees and protecting the health and wellbeing of individuals who may be at a higher risk. Agencies are also continuing to review their continuity of operations plans to ensure that the business of the people of Wisconsin can continue.

On March 15th, the Department of Children and Families issued guidance for childcare, head start, and pre-K program providers. They also announced rule waivers for childcare providers and Wisconsin Shares eligibility. Consistent with Gov. Evers' orders on mass gathering, on March 18th, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) issued new guidance for childcare, Head Start, and 3K/4K programs. We need to be able to rely on healthcare workers and first responders to keep our families, our neighbors, and our communities safe. Thus, we are currently not closing childcare centers because we need those centers to stay open for our healthcare workers, first responders, among other essential workers to help minimize disruption to those essential services. At this time, childcare centers may not operate with more than 10 staff present at a time and may not operate with more than 50 children present at a time. Voluntary closure beyond the scope of this order is allowed and left to the decision of individual providers. Find DCF's guidance [here](#).

Gov. Evers, our staff, and our administration are continuing to work on U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance. This is a top priority for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and WEM and they are actively working to collect all the needed information from regional economic development directors across the state in order to make the SBA declaration request.

Additionally, on March 18th, the WEDC announced a \$5-million grant program, Small Business 20/20, which will provide grants of up to \$20,000 to targeted businesses with 20 employees or less to cover rent and meet payroll expenses, including paid leave. The grants will be deployed by partnering with state's 23 community development financial institutions (CDFIs). Because the CDFIs have pre-existing relationships with many of these small businesses, CDFIs will be able to provide the grants quickly and directly to their clients. Find more information on Small Business 20/20 [here](#).

On March 20th, Gov. Evers announced that the SBA approved Wisconsin's request for small businesses affected by COVID-19 to access low-interest federal disaster loans. Under the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, businesses and non-profits may qualify for up to \$2 million in loans to cover

losses resulting from the pandemic. The interest rate on the loans is 3.75% for for-profit businesses and 2.75% for nonprofits. Participants may be able to extend payments for up to 30 years.

Businesses and non-profits can begin their loan applications at www.sba.gov/disaster. The [Wisconsin Small Business Development \(SBDC\) Network](#) and its partners are helping small businesses apply for federal disaster loans to mitigate the substantial economic injury as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wisconsin SBDC, a resource partner of the SBA, has created a web page to help business owners understand the qualifications and application process. That web page is available [here](#).

On March 21st, Gov. Evers and the Department of Revenue (DOR) announced they are extending income tax payment and return due dates to July 15th, 2020. See more details on the extension [here](#). The DOR has also released some frequently asked questions about tax filing deadlines. That document can be found [here](#). On March 28th, the DOR announced measures to help small businesses with sales tax payments due on March 31st. Small businesses can immediately request an extension to file sales and use tax returns due March 31, 2020 until April 30, 2020, and returns due April 30, 2020 until June 1, 2020. Requests can be sent to DORregistration@wisconsin.gov. You can find the DOR's full release with additional details [here](#).

The Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) also issued emergency guidance on character and fitness requirements for all payday and licensed lenders in Wisconsin. The DFI cautioned payday and licensed lenders that increasing interest rates, fees or borrowing costs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic could result in license suspension or revocation. Find DFI's release and guidance [here](#). The DFI also announced emergency guidance on remote online notarization to allow people across Wisconsin to access notarization services while ensuring the integrity of the notarization process. The DFI's emergency guidance can be found [here](#).

Additionally, on March 18th, Gov. Evers issued an emergency order waiving work search and modifying availability requirements for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for workers affected by COVID-19. Gov. Evers' order waives the requirement that (UI) claimants conduct at least four weekly search actions during the COVID-19 emergency while ensuring that claimants are considered available for work (and therefore eligible for benefits) if they are eligible for but out of work due to COVID-19.

On March 26th, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) announced that it is helping connect unemployed job seekers with essential business employers and those offering essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although those displaced from employment due to COVID-19 are not required to look for work to receive unemployment benefits, some may be interested in earning additional income and possibly extending their unemployment benefits. Unemployment benefits may still be paid to individuals working part-time; while wages earned may reduce the weekly benefit, it can extend the amount of time one receives benefits.

DWD has created a webpage to connect job seekers to the in-demand jobs posted on JobCenterofWisconsin.com. These jobs include healthcare occupations like registered nurses and pharmacists, but also transportation and material moving occupations, such as laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, and light truck or delivery service drivers who help transport supplies, food, and other products that still need to be delivered to grocery stores, restaurants, and hospitals. Visit wisconsinjobcenter.org/lookforjobs/in-demand.htm to connect to in-demand jobs in Wisconsin.

Employers looking to connect with job seekers can post positions for free on JobCenterofWisconsin.com, Wisconsin's free online job search tool. Both employers and job seekers can connect on the site without charge. Employers who need assistance posting jobs on JobCenterofWisconsin.com can email

JobCenterofWisconsin@dwd.wi.gov or call (888) 258-9966 to connect with a Business Services Representative.

On March 24th, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) also announced that fees would be waived for all Wisconsin State Parks and Trails that continue to remain open to the public. While the fees are waived and all State Parks, Trails and Forests remain open, we are still encouraging people to maintain physical distance and not to congregate around restrooms or other facilities. The DNR will continue to monitor on-the-ground circumstances each day to determine if park closures become necessary. You can find the DNR's announcement [here](#).

In an effort to help ensure emergency responders and firefighters can continue to assist in responding to COVID-19, on March 26th, the DNR announced they are taking proactive measures to prevent wildfires this spring. The DNR is suspending burning permits and all burning of debris in barrels, burning of debris piles on the ground, grass, or wooded areas is prohibited at this time.

In an effort to address anticipated shortages of healthcare workers in responding to COVID-19 and in preparation for potential surges in the pandemic, Gov. Evers and Secretary-designee Palm issued an order to help bolster the healthcare workforce during the public health emergency. Among other important steps, the order: simplifies the healthcare license renewal process; encourages recently retired professionals with expired licenses to re-enter practice; provides an avenue for licensed out-of-state practitioners to practice in Wisconsin without first requiring an in-state credential; and eliminates time limits for temporary licenses.

The order also includes provisions designed to enable nursing students close to graduation to be a part of the state's COVID-19 response by adjusting some clinical education requirements. It suspends practice restrictions for advanced practice nurses, enabling them to more efficiently and effectively respond during the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, the order provides flexibility to physician assistants in order to meet the current unpredictable changes in emergency needs and eliminates some late renewal fees for individuals whose licenses have lapsed and provides the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) with flexibility to eliminate other fees when needed. This is designed to simplify the licensing process for retirees or others who left their professions in good standing for other reasons by easing or eliminating certain credentialing renewal requirements, such as the need to earn specified numbers of continuing education units, so that returning providers can focus on direct patient care and not activities that take them away from the front lines or the bedside. This order is effectively immediately and will remain in effect through the duration of the public health emergency. You can find a copy of the order [here](#).

On March 16th, Gov. Evers directed the DHS to issue an order banning mass gatherings—both public and private—of 50 people or more effective at 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, March 17th. A new order was issued on March 17th banning mass gatherings—both public and private—of 10 people or more effective at 5:00 p.m. on March 17th. Critical infrastructure and services such as grocery stores, food pantries, childcare centers, pharmacies, and hospitals, among other venues, are currently exempt from this order. “Mass gathering” is any planned or spontaneous, public or private event or convening that will bring together or is likely to bring together 10 or more people in a single room or single confined or enclosed space at the same time.

(Note that previous versions of this document included FAQs on mass gatherings. Those FAQs were removed as that guidance is no longer applicable under the safer at home order issued on March 24th.)

We've taken some important steps such as prohibiting mass gatherings, but time is of the essence in responding to COVID-19 so we can prevent and manage the spread of COVID-19 to ensure our healthcare workers and system are not overwhelmed by an influx of COVID-19 cases. As we've worked to respond to and prevent the spread of COVID-19, we've have been careful to listen to public health experts and to be mindful of the effects our proactive steps could and will have on our frontline workers and the most vulnerable in our communities. Late last week, the governor said he didn't think we'd need to get to a "safer at home" order—a "safer at home" order wasn't something the governor thought we'd need to do, and it's not something the governor wanted to do. However, the governor has also said all along that we would listen to the science and public health experts to make the best decision possible for the people of our state.

Over the past few days, we've talked with public health experts and with business leaders and local elected officials around the state, and overwhelmingly the response has been that we need an all-hands-on-deck approach to stopping the spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin. In fact, business leaders have suggested that it is imperative to slow the growth of the disease and that the state cease all non-essential business statewide. The bottom line is that COVID-19 has been and continues to be a rapidly evolving situation—sometimes it changes by the hour. That means sometimes our response must change as we have new information. In this case, new information was predictive modeling that demonstrated the implications of failing to take increased measures to prevent further spread of COVID-19 (to learn more about this, please review [the March 23rd DHS briefing](#)).

Thus, based on the advice from public health experts, the governor made the decision to direct Secretary Palm to issue a "safer at home" order. On March 23rd, Gov. Evers announced a "safer at home" order would be issued on Tuesday, March 24th. The governor announced the order in advance of its issuance in an effort to be as transparent as possible for families, businesses, and local governments, among others, across our state. The governor's goal—and our administration's goal—is to keep people safe. To this end, having people across our state have as much information and as much notice as possible about an announcement like this is crucial. It was important to us that the people of our state knew that this order would be coming in advance so that individuals were not blindsided by the new order.

On March 24th, Gov. Evers and Secretary-designee Palm issued the "safer at home" order prohibiting all nonessential travel with some exceptions. The order also contains detailed information regarding the exemptions provided to certain businesses. The order is effective on Wednesday, March 25th, at 8:00 a.m. until April 24th at 8:00 a.m. unless a superseding order is issued. You can find the order [here](#). Under the order, Wisconsin residents are able to:

- Perform tasks essential to maintain health and safety, such as obtaining medicine or seeing a doctor;
- Get necessary services or supplies for themselves or their family or household members, such as getting food and supplies, pet food and supplies necessary for staying at home;
- Care for a family member in another household; and
- Care for older adults, minors, dependents, people with disabilities or other vulnerable persons.

Businesses allowed to operate under the Safer at Home order include, but are not limited to:

- Health care operations, including home health workers;
- Critical infrastructure;
- Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise vulnerable individuals;
- Fresh and non-perishable food retailers, including convenience stores, grocery stores, farmers' markets, and food banks;
- Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food and goods directly to residences;

- Pharmacies, health care supply stores and health care facilities;
- Child care facilities, with some limitations;
- Gas stations and auto repair facilities;
- Banks;
- Laundry businesses, dry cleaners and services necessary for maintaining the safety, sanitation and essential operation of a residence, including garbage collection;
- Hardware stores, plumbers, and electricians;
- Educational institutions, for the purposes of facilitating distance learning;
- Roles required for any business to maintain minimum basic operations, which includes security, and payroll; and
- Law and safety, and essential government functions will continue under the recommended action.

If you or your constituents have questions about which businesses are considered “essential” or want to inquire about changing their status under this order, please direct them to WEDC.org/essentialbusiness.

It is exceedingly important that information being relayed, promoted, or circulated by elected officials and to the people of Wisconsin is accurate. Thus, we want to be explicitly clear: Individuals do not need special permission to leave their homes. Similarly, if a business is an Essential Business or Operation as defined in this order, it does not need documentation or certification to continue its work that is done in compliance with this order. Workers providing essential care or services in our communities will be allowed to continue to travel to and from work. That includes folks like healthcare professionals, grocers, family caregivers, among other people whose work is critical for folks across our state.

The DHS is encouraging people to limit their interactions to the same people, not different small groups. Shrinking the circle of interactions will help prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, as the governor has specifically mentioned on several occasions, we are still encouraging people to go outside to take a walk, walk the dogs, go for a bike ride, etc.—this is good for everyone’s physical and mental health. Beyond this, we are encouraging folks not to take any other unnecessary trips, and to limit travel to essential needs like going to the doctor, grabbing groceries, or getting medication. If it’s essential for folks to travel or if they do go outside, we are still asking people to stay 6 feet away from others and shared spaces such as park shelters and visitor centers.

SAFER AT HOME ORDER FAQs	
Where does the Safer at Home order apply?	This order applies to the entire state. All Wisconsinites must stay at home as much as possible and non-essential businesses and operations must cease, with limited exceptions for minimum basic operations and working from home. All public and private gatherings of any number of people that are not part of a single household or living unit are prohibited, except for the limited exceptions contained in the order.
What are social distancing requirements?	Under the order, social distancing requirements include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintaining social distancing of six feet between people; 2. Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer; 3. Covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands); 4. Regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces; 5. Not shaking hands; and 6. Following all other public health recommendations issues by DHS and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.
Is this order mandatory?	Yes. All Wisconsinites need to do their part to keep their family, friends, neighbors and communities safe.

Individuals may leave their homes for the following reasons:

1. To perform essential governmental functions, to work at essential businesses and operations, to do minimum basic operations for non-essential businesses, and essential travel, all of which is defined in the order;
2. To obtain services at or to work for health care and public health operations, certain human services operations, or essential infrastructure;
3. To perform tasks that are essential to health and safety such as obtaining medical supplies or medication, seeking emergency services, or visiting a health care professional;
4. To obtain necessary services or supplies such as food, gasoline, pet supplies, and other household consumer products;
5. To engage in outdoor activity, as long as they maintain social distancing; and
6. To care for a family members, friend, or pet in another household, and to transport family members, friends, or pets as allowed under the order.

Will I be required to carry documentation to leave my home?

No. Individuals do not need special permission to leave their homes, but they must comply with this order as to when it is permissible to leave home. Similarly, if a business is an essential business or operation as outlined in this order, it does not need documentation or certification to continue work that is done in compliance with this order.

Can I go outside for walks, outdoor exercise, or to play?

Yes. You may engage in outdoor activities that meet social distancing requirements. You may travel to public and state parks for walks, hikes, and bike rides. No team or contact sports are permitted. Playgrounds are closed.

What is considered an essential business?

Please read the order carefully to determine what is considered an essential business or operation. Even if a business or operation is essential, there are still important restrictions on how the business can operate. For example, all entities that remain open as essential businesses or operations must implement social distancing as much as possible and use technology to avoid meeting in person, including virtual meetings, teleconference, and remote work (i.e., work from home). The order contains specific restrictions on each kind of essential business and operation.

Essential businesses and operations include the following, which are clarified in detail in the Order:

1. Any business or worker identified in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) [memo](#), and any subsequent version of this memo
2. Stores that sell groceries and medicine, including bakeries, provided they: (i) close all seating intended for consuming food; (ii) cease any self-service operations of salad bars, beverage stations, and buffets; (iii) except for grocery stores, prohibit customers from self-dispensing all unpackaged food; and (iv) abide by social distancing requirements.
3. Food and beverage production, transport, and agriculture
4. Restaurants and bars, for take-out and delivery service of food
5. Organizations that provide charitable and social services, including food banks and shelters
6. Religious entities as long as any gathering includes fewer than 10 people in a room or confined space at a time and individuals adhere to social distancing requirements as much as possible.
7. Weddings and funerals as long as any gathering includes fewer than 10 people in a room or confined space at a time and individuals adhere to social distancing requirements as much as possible.
8. News media
9. Gas stations and businesses needed for transportation
10. Financial institutions and services
11. Hardware and supplies stores
12. Critical trades
13. Mail, post, shipping, logistics, delivery, and pick-up services
14. Laundry services
15. Supplies to work from home
16. Supplies for essential businesses and operations and essential governmental functions
17. Transportation to and from activities permitted in the order
18. Home-based care and services
19. Professional services
20. Manufacture, distribution, and supply chain for critical products and industries
21. Critical labor union functions

22. Hotels and motels
23. Higher educational institutions for purposes of facilitating distance learning, performing critical research, or other essential functions

In the exceptional circumstance that a business is not explicitly listed as an essential business or operation, but believes it should be included, businesses should consult the information page on the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) website, here: <https://wedc.org/essentialbusiness/>.

In addition to essential businesses and operations, healthcare and public health operations, human services operations, essential infrastructure, essential governmental functions will continue to operate.

Will restaurants and bars remain open?

Restaurants may remain open for food take-out or delivery only and no seating may be provided. Carryout sales of alcohol beverages and food are allowed if permitted by state law and municipal ordinance. Customers may enter these establishments only for the purpose of ordering, picking up, and paying for food or beverage. Food and drink may not be consumed on the premises, either indoors and outdoors.

Any self-service operations of salad bars, beverage stations, and buffets must cease. Customers are prohibited from self-dispensing any unpackaged food or beverage.

Social distancing requirements must be implemented as much as possible.

Will hotels and motels remain open?

Hotels and motels are essential businesses and operations and can remain open if they follow the guidelines imposed on stores that sell groceries and medicine, restaurants, and bars. Guests are prohibited from congregating in lobbies or other common areas and social distancing requirements must be implemented. Hotel and motel swimming pools, hot tubs, and exercise facilities must close.

Does this order apply to child care settings?

Child care settings are essential businesses and operations. Secretary-designee Andrea Palm's [Emergency Order #6](#) remains in effect, with the following amendments:

Child care settings must prioritize care for families as follows:

Tier 1: Employees, contractors, and other support staff working in health care

Tier 2: Employees, contractors, and staff in vital areas outlined in the order

Child care settings include all licensed and certified child care providers who may provide care for any age or ages of children up to 13 years of age, unless specially licensed for children with disabilities up to 19 years of age.

Please see the Department of Children and Families [FAQ on this topic](#) for additional information.

Can I proceed with a wedding or funeral as planned?

Weddings and funerals can proceed as long as any gathering includes fewer than 10 people in a room or confined space at a time and individuals adhere to social distancing requirements as much as possible. If you need to travel to attend a wedding or funeral, you should check before you leave that your means of travel is still available. If travel is to another state, you should read any orders in place in that state before you leave.

What if I still have to go to work?

All essential businesses and operations are encouraged to remain open, but are encouraged to have employees work from home if it is possible for them to complete their job duties remotely. If you are a worker at one of these businesses, you must implement social distancing requirements as much as possible.

What if my business or operation is not essential?

Your business must close. Individuals are encouraged to work from home where possible.

You are permitted to do the minimum basic operations to maintain the value of your business's inventory, preserve the condition of the business's physical plant and equipment, ensure security, process payroll and employee benefits, or for related functions, including where these functions are outsourced to other entities.

Can I travel?

All forms of travel are prohibited unless explicitly excepted. Individuals utilizing mass transit must maintain social distancing of at least six feet as much as possible. Essential travel that is exempt includes:

1. Any travel related to essential activities, essential governmental functions, essential businesses and operations, or non-essential businesses' minimum basic operations.
2. Travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or vulnerable persons.
3. Travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, or any other services.
4. Travel to return to a place of residence from outside the jurisdiction.
5. Travel required by law enforcement or court order, including to transport children pursuant to a custody agreement.
6. Travel required for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside Wisconsin.

Individuals who work outside of Wisconsin are allowed to commute to other states for work purposes, as long as they comply with this order and orders from other states.

Does this order change the school closure order?

A previous order mandating the closure of public and private K-12 schools at 5pm on Wednesday, March 18th is still in effect. All schools must remain closed for instructional and extracurricular activities for the duration of the public health emergency or until a subsequent order lifts this specific restriction. Schools may be used for facilitating distance or virtual learning, essential government functions, and food distribution.

Are personal care businesses allowed to remain open?

No. All hair salons, barber shops, nail salons, day spas, electrolysis providers, waxing salons, eyebrow-care establishments, tattoo parlors, body art establishments and tanning facilities must close.

Will public libraries remain open?

Libraries must close for all in-person services, but may continue to provide online services and programming. Libraries may be used for essential government functions and food distribution.

Does the order specify places that must close?

Yes. All non-essential businesses and operations must close. K-12 schools and public libraries are closed, with some exceptions including virtual learning and on-line services. Additionally, all amusement parks, carnivals, water parks, licensed public or private swimming pools, splash pads, aquariums, zoos, museums, arcades, fairs, children's play centers, playgrounds, funplexes, theme parks, bowling alleys, movie and other theaters, concert and music halls, country clubs, social clubs, and gyms and fitness centers. This order applies to the above places and those like them whether they are indoors or outdoors.

Can I obtain care or boarding for my pet?

Non-essential veterinary care should be avoided, but you may leave your home to obtain necessary veterinary care and supplies for your pet. Grooming services must close. Pet boarding and daycare is an essential business and operation that may remain open.

Am I able to proceed with plans to move out of my house?

Moving and relocation services are essential businesses and operations.

Will golf courses remain open?

Golf courses are not considered essential businesses. Staff can perform minimum basic operations as defined in the order.

Are landscaping businesses allowed to operate?

Landscape businesses in general as well as those servicing the grounds of an essential business are not considered essential businesses or operations. Staff can perform minimum basic operations as defined in the order. The delivery of plants and flowers is not an essential business or operation.

Can local government bodies continue to conduct business?

All state, tribal, and local essential governmental functions can continue. This means that government bodies should continue all functions needed to ensure the continuing operation of the government body and provide and support the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Each government body is responsible for determining what functions, if any are necessary and identify employees and contractors necessary to perform those functions.

Government bodies should continue to follow the Wisconsin Department of Justice's Office of Open Government [guidance](#) regarding holding government meetings, and should consult directly with that office regarding specific open meetings questions.

My local government also issued an order like this. Which one do I follow?

You must follow the statewide order issued by DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. If a local order conflicts with the statewide order, you must follow the statewide order.

How will this order be enforced?

This order is enforceable by any local law enforcement official, including county sheriffs. Violation or obstruction of this order is punishable by imprisonment, fines, or both. Wis. Stat. § 252.25.
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After announcing the “safer at home” order, we have received some inquiries about Mendota Mental Health Institute and Winnebago Mental Health Institute. Both are open, functioning, and continuing their intake process.

Following his “safer at home” announcement, on March 28th, the governor announced he had directed DHS Secretary-designee Palm to order the suspension of evictions and foreclosures. The order prohibits landlords from evicting tenants for any reason unless failure to proceed with the eviction will result in an imminent threat of serious physical harm to another person and mortgagees from commencing civil action to foreclose on real estate for 60 days. However, the governor is urging those who remain able to meet their financial obligations to continue to do so. The order does not in any way relieve a person’s obligation to pay their rent or mortgage. You can find a copy of the order [here](#).

In addition to the “safer at home” order, the governor announced on March 23rd that he has assembled task forces in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to focus on six key areas, including:

- Specimen Collection and Laboratory Capacity
- Personal Protective Equipment and Essential Supplies
- Isolation Facilities
- Surge Capacity
- Healthcare Worker Childcare
- Contact Tracing and Surveillance

These task forces will help to ensure our healthcare workers have the resources they need to serve folks across our state.

On March 26th, Gov. Evers announced he has launched an initiative to acquire more PPE (e.g. gowns, gloves, and masks) to frontline COVID-19 workers. Wisconsinites can now go to:

covid19supplies.wi.gov/Donations to either donate or sell large quantities of PPE to the State of Wisconsin and the SEOC to distribute supplies to high-need communities. We are currently seeking:

- Surgical Gowns (S, L, XL, and XXL)
- Face/Surgical Masks (adult, pediatric)
- Gloves (Nitrile, Vinyl, or Butyl)
- N-95 Particulate Respirators
- Isolation Gowns
- Face Shields
- Tyvek Coveralls
- Thermometers
- Foot Coverings

If organizations or businesses have quantities of fewer than 50 of any of these items, they are encouraged to donate them to local health organizations instead of going through the buyback website. First responders and other non-medical organizations should communicate their PPE needs to their county or tribal emergency management office, which will then forward those requests to the SEOC for fulfillment. Medical facilities, including hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities and clinics, should

continue using the established process for requesting supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

NEXT STEPS

Gov. Evers, the DHS, and the governor's administration are continuing to receive consistent updates on the status of COVID-19. The governor's office will continue sharing information and provide updates as quickly as new actions or information become available. Please continue reaching out to the governor's legislative team and the DHS legislative team with any questions.

Additionally, we ask for your assistance in helping us disseminate accurate, up-to-date information so our constituents and members of the public can make informed decisions and keep themselves, family members, and neighbors safe. Please also continue to share any and all public health or COVID-19 related content from the governor's and DHS' Facebook and Twitter accounts to ensure your constituents and members of the public continue to receive accurate and current information about the status of COVID-19 in Wisconsin.

Please continue to share information with members of the public on how to prevent illness or avoid exposure to this virus. In the case of COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently advises that common symptoms include flu-like symptoms (fever (100° F or higher), cough or sore throat, headache or body aches, and in some cases diarrhea and vomiting) or symptoms of respiratory illness (fever (100° F or higher), cough, and shortness of breath).

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. You can protect yourself and others by taking preventative measures including:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home as much as possible except to get medical care
- Cancel events and avoid groups, gatherings, play dates, and nonessential appointments.
- Stay six feet away from other people.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue (then throw the tissue in the trash) or use the inside of your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 (at home or in a health care setting).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
 - For information about handwashing, see CDC's Handwashing website.
 - For information specific to healthcare providers, see CDC's Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings.