



The [statewide COVID-19 website](#) is a one stop shop that consolidates information from state agencies, and provides up-to-date information and guidance regarding COVID-19. DHS has also offered information on their website on [How and Where to Get Tested](#).

This week I would normally be holding my Holiday Town Hall, but in order to observe the social distancing requirements that are necessary to control the spread of COVID-19 I have decided that it is best to wait until next year to reinstate this holiday tradition.

I wish each of you and your families a safe and joyful holiday season, and look forward to seeing you all again soon!

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Worldwide Vaccine Rollout Begins



The United Kingdom is the first country to begin inoculation with a treatment that has gone through full testing, marking a huge step forward in the effort to combat the pandemic. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was approved by the UK's drug regulator last week.

In the U.S., the FDA plans to review the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for emergency use on Thursday. Federal officials are hoping to have the vaccine distributed to as many as 24 million people by mid-January.

In Wisconsin, according to the [vaccination plan](#) developed by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, health care workers will be the first to get access to the vaccines, followed by people living and

working in long-term care facilities, essential workers, and those over the age of 65.

Citing high rates of infection across our state, [Governor Evers has requested](#) that Wisconsin's healthcare workers and high-risk populations be prioritized during our nation's rollout.

[Read more.](#)

Unemployment Claimants Report Harsh Penalties for Honest Mistakes

When filing for Unemployment, claimants need to answer a litany of questions, and continue filing weekly claims in order to get access to their benefits. These questions are not always straightforward, and it sometimes happens that a claimant answers a question or reports their information inaccurately through honest mistakes.

Some claimants who have found themselves in this situation in the past have been required to pay back the benefits that they have received as well as a hefty fee. In addition, some of these claimants have become barred from ever receiving unemployment again.

Many changes that have been made to the unemployment program over the years have made applying more difficult in order to dissuade people from seeking this benefit that they have paid into. During the economic toll of the pandemic, we are seeing the effects on those who made honest mistakes in the past and are unable to rely on this system now when so many people across our state have lost access to their jobs through no fault of their own.

Audits of the Unemployment System have been completed, and more have been requested, but our work as legislators to address these issues needed to begin yesterday. There is no good reason why the Majority has refused to convene the State Legislature in order to respond to this and other issues related to the pandemic for the last 240 days.

I will continue to push for realistic improvements to the Unemployment System. We must make sure that Wisconsinites have access to the benefits that are supported by their salaries and wages during emergencies and that they are not banned from those benefits due to honest mistakes.

[Read more.](#)

The Deadline to Enroll for Health Insurance through the ACA is Approaching

Wisconsinites can continue to sign up for health coverage via [Healthcare.gov](#) through Dec. 15, 2020! And those who already have insurance through the ACA can renew, change, or update their plans for next year.

For free help signing up for a plan, visit [WisCovered.com](#) where experts can help simplify the enrollment process and provide information about programs

like [BadgerCare](#) for families that qualify for free coverage.

Now during the COVID-19 health crisis, the provisions of the ACA offering options to American families and protecting those with preexisting conditions are critical to the people of Wisconsin and our country.

Comparing the Governor and the Legislature's COVID Relief Plans

Governor Evers and the Assembly Republicans have now released two different paths forward for Wisconsin to follow in addressing the Coronavirus pandemic. This [article in the Wisconsin Examiner](#) has contrasted the major elements of the two plans.

However, during negotiations between the Governor and the Senate and Assembly Leadership, it became clear that the [Senate Republican's position is to wait](#) until the new year to take any action, and that they believe there is sufficient surplus in Wisconsin's Medicaid budget to cover all of our state's needs.

This means that without Congressional action there will be no guarantees for Wisconsinites, as many of the provisions of the federal CARES Act and Wisconsin's lone COVID relief bill which was passed nearly 240 days ago will expire on December 31st. This is completely unacceptable and an abdication of the responsibilities that these legislators assumed when they sought public office. Despite my many requests to meet in session to find solutions for the people of Wisconsin, I have not heard any good reasons from my colleagues in leadership for the Legislature's absence.

Governor Evers has [appealed directly to the President and Wisconsin's Congressional Delegation](#) for action at the federal level because of the intransigence of Wisconsin's State Legislature.

Local Job Opportunities

Many local companies are looking for seasonal and permanent positions. For more information about local opportunities register as a DirectConnectMKE job seeking member.

You can also access employment support services through the website: www.dcmke.yolobe.com.

Remembering Pearl Harbor

Monday, December 7th was the 79th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor that precipitated America's entry into World War II. Many ceremonies were held across the country and at the Pearl Harbor National Memorial on Oahu, Hawaii.

In advance of the ceremonies this year, the [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced](#) on December 1st that the remains of four more sailors from that day have been identified, out of the over-150 who are still unidentified.

In addition to honoring the memory of those lost during the attack in Hawaii, the Wisconsin National Guard also paid homage to the efforts of the famous Red Arrow Division, which spent more days in combat during World War II than any other U.S. Army division. In the anthology *654: the Red Arrow in World War II* the Wisconsin National Guard tells the story of the first American division to bring the fight to the Japanese in the South Pacific.

States Prepare for the Next Round of Redistricting

Every ten years following the Census, our country undergoes the process of redistricting on a state-by-state basis. In accordance with the results of the Census state may gain or lose seats in their congressional delegation or state Legislatures, and legislative districts can sometimes take on completely new shapes depending on who controls this process and the demographic shifts of an area.

Over the previous 9 years since Wisconsin's current legislative maps were last drawn, there has been much attention paid to the particularities and effects of the redistricting process. Now as the 2020 Census has finished collecting its data for the next ten years of funding allocation and redistricting, many states are preparing themselves for the next round of redistricting.

In Wisconsin, Governor Evers has recommended that our state begin a new process that does not involve politicians drawing their own maps. This past session and in previous sessions, I have cosponsored bills in the legislature that would put this responsibility in the hands of a nonpartisan commission, similar to the process used in Iowa. In anticipation of this decade's redistricting, Governor Evers has created [the People's Maps Commission](#) to draw a set of maps with the input of voters rather than elected officials. The next meeting of the commission will be on January 14th, and feature the 4th Congressional District which covers the City of Milwaukee and surrounding areas.

[Read more.](#)

How the Polio Vaccine Faced Shortages and Setbacks

In 1955 Jonas Salk announced the success of a new vaccine for Polio following the worst polio outbreak in our nation's history. The news of the vaccine was a relief to the people, especially the parents, of America.

"I have no words to thank you." President Eisenhower expressed to Salk during a ceremony in the Rose Garden. "I am very, very happy."

However, the rollout of the vaccine was rocky, involving critical shortages, a contamination crisis, and competition from a rival vaccine.

[Read more.](#)

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