



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](#).

If you're not busy, please make a call, send a card, or write a letter to someone you know who lives alone or may need assistance.

Bless each of you during this difficult time of uncertainty and suffering. Take good care!

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Happy Holidays!



I hope that you enjoy this photo of me (middle) and my sister (left) visiting Santa at the Southgate Mall!

The holiday season is so special because of the memories that we create together with our loved ones.

Although Southgate is gone, it's memory lives on for me in this photo, and gives me and my sister something that we can laugh about together today.

Although circumstances this year are different from years past, and it seems like it is more complicated to enjoy time with friends and family, our experiences will also create unique and lasting memories.

I wish the very best to all of you and yours! For a little fun, check out [how some popular Christmas Traditions got their start](#).

Vaccines Begin Rolling out in Wisconsin

Wisconsin has entered into "Phase 1A" of the vaccine rollout, which will move forward in phases, beginning with healthcare personnel, residents of long term care facilities, essential workers, adults with high risk medical conditions, and adults 65+.

The vaccines that are being approved by the Food and Drug Administration, have been hailed as a "miracle" by President Trump and others, because they have the potential to help our country and the world finally end the difficulties caused by the pandemic. In the past, vaccines have been able to help us effectively eradicate terrible diseases, [some of which now only seem like distant memories](#).

Hospitals across the state have already begun receiving and administering vaccines, and pharmacies will begin administering vaccines in nursing homes [beginning on November 28th](#).

Rollout plans will be specific to local health departments, so be sure to check with your local health department for specific information, but in general they are following the [schedule put forward by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Wisconsin has begun receiving doses of both the Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines, but has [received fewer of each type of the vaccines than expected in its first shipments](#), and expects that they may continue to receive lower than requested shipments for several more weeks, which will prolong each phase of the vaccine distribution for our state.

New Committee Assignments

Recently, the 2021-22 committee assignments for both the [Democratic](#) and [Republican](#) caucuses of the State Senate were announced.

I am very proud to be appointed to serve as the ranking member of the Committee on Transportation & Local Government, as well as the Committee on Veteran and Military Affairs & Constitution and Federalism.

I will also be serving as a member of the Committee on Health, the Joint Audit Committee and the Joint Committee on Information Policy & Technology.

I look forward to serving with my colleagues on these committees, and looking for ways to advance policies that best serve the people of Wisconsin.

Congress Reaches New Stimulus Deal

Following months of negotiations, Congress has passed a \$900 billion COVID-19 relief package and has sent the bill to the President for his signature.

The bill includes a \$300 per week benefit for those receiving unemployment, a \$600 direct stimulus payment for most Americans, as well as subsidies for struggling businesses like restaurants and theaters, money for schools and health care providers, and an eviction protection through the end of January.

[Read more.](#)

The WDVA has Announced Grant Awards for Wisconsin Veterans Organizations

Recently, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs announced a set of grant awards totaling \$620,940 for organizations helping Wisconsin's Veterans, of that total, \$311,000 was awarded to organizations that are either in, or headquartered near the 3rd Senate District.

This funding will be like a shot in the arm for organizations like Heroes for Healthcare, the Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative, the Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce, and many others who are working for Wisconsin's veterans.

I would like to thank Governor Evers, WDVA Secretary Mary Kolar and her tremendous staff at the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs for working hard to secure grant funding for organizations that are serving veterans.

For information about all of the organizations that won these grant awards, check out this [Press Release from Governor Evers](#).

The Milwaukee Energy Efficiency Program Can Help You Upgrade Your Home

A partnership between the City of Milwaukee's Environmental Collaboration Office and Summit Credit Union is offering hundreds of dollars in rebates for qualified energy efficiency projects.

Households can receive up to \$1,000 when they work with participating contractors.

Learn more at [Milwaukee.gov/me2](https://milwaukee.gov/me2)

I am Introducing Legislation to Protect Public Health and Elections Workers and Calling for a Bipartisan Task Force to Address Potential Election Reforms

I have drafted legislation to provide severe penalties for anyone who is found to have committed battery, or threatened to do so, to a state or public health department official, employee, or a member of that person's family. The same protections would be included for election officials. I will be introducing this bill early on in the 2021-2022 Legislative Session.

We have health care workers doing the best they can do in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, and they should never have to face anyone who maybe believes it's all a hoax. They are doing their jobs – and thank goodness for them in doing so – and they absolutely do not need threats to them or their families. I really can't believe what I'm hearing and reading.

[Read more.](#)

In order to address many of the concerns that are leading to tense situations around our state and country, I called for a bipartisan task force on elections to review potential changes to election laws in order to encourage greater voter participation, and other procedural fixes such as allowing for the processing of absentee ballots on the Monday before Election Day.

Recently, I was featured in a [Politifact Rating](#) for the true statement that "Wisconsin is one of the few states that doesn't allow absentee ballots to be processed before Election Day."

We need to take a different approach to find areas where both parties can agree on issues and where compromises can be reached with regard to changes to our election laws. We owe it to Wisconsin voters to ensure our elections are well-run, that it is easy for voters to cast their ballots while maintaining the integrity of our election system.

Why the 1918 Flu Pandemic Never Really Ended and other stories of pandemics in history

As a part of their [collection of articles about pandemics that have been seen throughout world history](#), History.com has included a piece explaining how the influenza strain commonly known as the "Spanish Flu," never really went away, but instead stuck around as the regular seasonal flu.

In addition to the over 50 million lives that the 1918 Flu took during its original waves, this strain went on to combine with bird flu and swine flu in later years like in 1957, 1968, and 2009. Because of this virus' tenacity and potential to combine with other viruses to create new pandemics, the 1918 Flu has been given the nickname, "the mother of all pandemics."

According to genetic analyses, the same novel flu strain that made the jump to humans in 1918, appears to be the direct ancestor of every seasonal and pandemic flu that we have seen over the past century.

[Read more.](#)

COVID-19 Contact Tracing App

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services will be launching a COVID-19 contact tracing app called "WI Exposure Notification" on December 23rd to help notify people if anyone that they may have come into contact with has tested positive more quickly.

The app send notifications anonymously to other devices that an infected individual's phone has interacted with through Bluetooth signals. It does require users to enable the app and Bluetooth communication on their phone before they test positive, but by doing this, the app is able to function without accessing personal or GPS data.

[Read more.](#)

How Women Used Christmas to Fight Slavery

In 1834, Christmas was an opportunity for the women in the recently formed Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.

These women organized Christmas bazaars where they would sell donated gifts in order to raise funds for the cause of abolitionism.

[More info.](#)

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