

The Nass Report



Wisconsin State Government and the 11th Senate District

July 30, 2020

Wisconsin Covid-19 Testing – Unreported Negative Tests Will Exceed at Least 30,000

Nass: Waukesha County Latest to Confirm Negative Results Problem - 8,700 and Growing.

Senator Steve Nass (R-Whitewater) announced today Waukesha County has confirmed that their backlog in entering negative Covid-19 test results has reached 4,700 and is growing daily. Waukesha County also noted that an additional 4,000 negative results that were entered in the state system over the last few weeks are not showing up in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) publicly released data. The current total of unreported negatives results from Waukesha County is 8,700. Combined with Dane County's 17,000 unreported negatives confirmed last week, we are now at 25,700 negative results not included in state calculations of Covid-19 positivity rates.

“We have a full blown crisis with the state and local system for reporting vital Covid-19 data in real time. Just two counties have already confirmed 25,700 unreported negatives and my office is aware of at least another 4,000 that have been preliminarily identified in backlogs in about six other counties as we await their confirmation. Conservatively, the unreported backlog total in Wisconsin will easily exceed 30,000 negative results and could escalate much higher as some big counties have yet to release information on their backlogs,” Nass said.

Nass noted that a second more ominous concern has developed regarding how Wisconsin DHS has been releasing data to the public. Every day, DHS releases data to the media and public with the implication that the data is reflective of Covid-19 test results reported to the state in the last 24-hours. However, the state's daily data release often includes results (for both positive and negatives) that are many days old and in some cases a week or more old.

“Wisconsin's Covid-19 data system is currently challenged by many issues that are increasingly invalidating its reliable use for policy decisions by public and private sector officials in need of real time data. Covid-19 is a disease that for most people

has a 10-14 day infection period. Yet, the state's supposed real time system is actually built on data at least one-week old, and more often than not, nearing two-weeks old in its timeliness," Nass said.

DHS continues to provide only limited information regarding the statewide backlog even with their confirmation it exists and is significant. Here is what we know:

-Most counties are attempting to enter positive Covid-19 test results in the state data collection system within 1-3 days.

-Counties that have seen increases in Covid-19 testing volumes over the last two months (which is most of the 72 counties) have dealt with backlogs in entering the negative results into the state system. Often the delay is believed to be about 5-6 days, but more counties are acknowledging in recent days that the backlogs are at least 7-10 days in many cases.

Nass noted that when DHS provides its daily Covid-19 briefing, the public and media are given the impression that testing data is timely and accurate. *He emphasized that the backlog in entering negative results dramatically skews the percentage positive calculations (this includes the daily percentage, the 7-day percentage and the 14-day rolling average) used in determining if we are identifying more cases due to increased testing or are in a period of increasing spread of infections for other reasons.*

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