



ROBERT W. WIRCH

STATE SENATOR TWENTY-SECOND DISTRICT

October 2, 2020



Dear friend,

Our state is nearing a danger zone when it comes to Covid-19 infections. While positive cases have been on the rise for several weeks, the number of hospitalizations and deaths has begun to surge, as well. Medical facilities are being stretched thin. Even in the face of this concerning news, a conservative group is attempting to have the statewide mask order thrown out by the courts. We've got to get this outbreak under control as we head into colder weather and cold and flu season. The federal government has begun notifying residents who may not have claimed their federal Covid stimulus that they have until Oct. 15 to do so. Finally, with the November election quickly approaching, state officials are sharing warning signs of election-related frauds and scams. Please, folks, listen to the advice of the experts - stay home as much as you can; wear a mask if you must go out; practice physical distancing; and wash your hands. We know what works to slow the spread. It's truly in our hands.

Sincerely,

Bob

State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7882 • (608) 267-8979

Toll-Free Office Hotline: 1-888-769-4724

Email: Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us • Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen22/news> • Fax: (608) 267-0984
(262) 694-7379

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In Case You Missed It



Wisconsin Hospitals Nearing Capacity as Covid Surge Continues

The recent spike in new Covid-19 cases in Wisconsin continues, with no sign of slowing down. As the virus has spread out from colleges and universities into the surrounding communities and rural areas, the number of hospitalizations is also rising at an alarming rate. Hospitals in the Fox Valley and Green Bay area have had to transfer patients to other facilities, and hospitals in Wausau have had to implement waiting lists. Every county in the state has “high” Covid-19 activity. During a press briefing on the situation earlier this week, Dr. Ryan Westergard, chief medical officer for the Department of Health Services, said, “We are in a crisis right now. The likelihood that this is going to get much worse before it gets better is very real.” Meanwhile, on Thursday, the state recorded its most Covid deaths in a single day with 27.



Increased Covid Testing Options

While the state Department of Health Services cites “High Covid Activity” in **all 72 counties**, there are currently an increased number of options locally for anyone looking to get tested. Your primary health care provider is always an option, but there are many community testing sites available, as well.

National Guard Drive-through testing: The Wisconsin National Guard will be conducting free, drive-through testing from 10 am to 6 pm on Oct. 2, 3, 5 and 6 at the Kenosha County Job Center, 8600 Sheridan Rd. No appointment and no symptoms are needed, and the testing is open to anyone who lives or works in Wisconsin, ages 5 and up. Online registration is welcome at

<https://register.covidconnect.wi.gov>.



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Advocate Aurora: Drive-thru testing at both the Kenosha and Burlington locations for community members exhibiting at least one symptom of Covid-19; advance registration is required at aah.org/testing or by phone at 877-819-5034

CVS Pharmacy: Drive-through testing available at CVS in Kenosha (3710 57th Ave.) and Racine (3915 Durand Ave.); advance registration required at <https://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing>

Froedert South: Drive-through testing is available to those who qualify after completing an initial phone evaluation at (262)671-7777 between 8 am and 4:30 pm Monday-Friday

Kenosha Community Medical Center/Gateway Kenosha Campus: A drive-through testing site is open to those who complete a quick registration process at (262)925-1325

Ascension: Offering testing by appointment, (833)981-0711 or choose.ascension.org/onlinecare

To find other testing sites in the state, visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/community-testing.htm>.



Governor Evers Launches “Just Recovery” Initiative to Address Racial Inequality in Covid-19 Impact

While everyone has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in some way, communities of color are disproportionately at risk of physical and economic devastation. As a result, Gov. Evers, along with Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, the Department of Health Services and the University of Wisconsin -Madison Population Health Institute have created a new program called the Just Recovery for Racial Equity Initiative. The initiative will work with community-based organizations to identify support strategies for responding to Covid-19, recovery and building resilience in communities of color. The program will receive \$2.6 million in funding that will be used to provide grants for local organizations, staffing and translation services and other things.

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Find more at <https://www.wispolitics.com/2020/gov-evers-lt-gov-barnes-dhs-uw-population-health-institute-announce-just-recovery-initiative-to-address-disproportionate-impact-of-covid-19-on-wisconsins-communities-of-color/>.



Conservative Group Challenges Mask Order in Court

With Wisconsin health officials struggling to contain the Covid-19 outbreak, attorneys for the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty, a far-right group, are suing to have the statewide mask order thrown out. The group had challenged the initial mask order but did not seek immediate action to end the order until now. One of the six plaintiffs listed on the suit is the Chair of the St. Croix County Republican Party. Wisconsin is currently one of 34 states with mask mandates. Over the past two weeks, Wisconsin ranks third in the country for new Covid cases per capita. Health officials worldwide agree that, along with washing hands, social distancing, and staying home as much as possible, wearing a mask is an effective way to slow the spread of Covid-19.



IRS Says More Than 110,000 Wisconsin Residents Might Not Have Claimed Covid Stimulus Checks, Can Still Do So

The Internal Revenue Service says that approximately 111,000 Wisconsinites might not have claimed their federal coronavirus stimulus checks and are giving them a limited amount of time to do so. The IRS began mailing out tens of thousands of letters last week to notifying residents that they believe could still be eligible that they have until Oct. 15 to claim their stimulus funds. The funds were provided as part of the federal CARES Act in response to Covid-caused job losses, and the IRS believes that most who have not yet claimed their payments are people who aren't required to file a tax return because they have low or no incomes. These individuals can complete a short-form return at <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here> to claim their stimulus payments.



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The stimulus checks amount to \$1,200 for a single person or \$2,400 for a married couple; people with children under age 17 at the end of 2019 may also receive an additional \$500 per qualifying child.



Wisconsin Elections Commission and State Consumer Protection Officials Warn of Election-Related Scams

With the November 3 election just a month away, many different groups are reaching out to Wisconsin voters. Most of these are legitimate, but some are not. Scammers are looking to use election-related tactics to steal your money and identity. As a result, the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) and state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) are warning citizens to beware.

Voting scams trick you by mimicking legitimate activities that happen around elections. Some examples include:

- **Fraudulent donation requests:** Real campaigns often call, text or email supporters to ask for donations. Scammers might use spoofing technology to use a legitimate phone number to impersonate a campaign representative. To avoid being scammed, be wary of unsolicited calls asking for donations. Make donations through platforms you know and trust, such as a campaign's official website.
- **Imposter election surveys:** Real research organizations conduct phone surveys throughout the election season to gauge voter interests, opinions and perspectives. Some candidates or advocacy groups use fake polls, or "push polls" to influence your vote, or they may try to disguise who is responsible for the poll. Under state law, anyone conducting a poll is required to tell you the name and address of the person or committee paying for the poll, if you ask. If they won't tell you who is paying for the poll, hang up. Impersonators may offer you a gift card or some other incentive to participate in a fake survey, but first they need your personal

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information, such as a credit card number, date of birth, or Social Security number. Do not rely on caller ID; scammers can “spoof” the phone number of a legitimate organization to make it appear official. Never provide account or credit card information to anyone you did not reach out to, especially someone claiming you could win a prize.

- **Registering to vote:** Volunteers or staff with civic and political organizations may contact potential voters through calls, texts, social media or even in-person to help drive voter registration and turnout. Some organizations with incorrect data may contact you in the belief that you have been removed from the voter list and offer to re-register you. They may direct you to a website that collects personal information, which they use to contact you with reminders and political messages. Scammers also make alarming claims and pretend to alert you to an expired voter registration as a phishing attempt. The scammer then offers to register you, and during the process collects a large amount of personal information they may use to steal your identity. The Wisconsin Elections Commission or your local clerk’s office will not text you with voter registration alerts, so you may ignore these kinds of text messages.

Unofficial websites seeking personal information to check your voter registration status or register you to vote should be avoided. You can securely register, check your registration status, and find trusted information on the MyVote Wisconsin website at <https://myvote.wi.gov>. You can also register by mail, in-person at your local municipal clerk’s office, or at the polling place on Election Day. Your municipal clerk’s office is another trusted source of information.

- **Voting by absentee ballot:** On Sept. 1, the Wisconsin Elections Commission mailed an educational packet to all registered voters who had not already applied for an absentee ballot. You can request an absentee ballot online at <https://myvote.wi.gov> or you can fill out the paper application form included in the mailing and submit it using the postage-paid return envelope.

The legal deadline for your application to be received is Thursday, Oct. 29, 2020. Political parties and candidates may also mail out absentee ballot requests to their supporters. They may also email, text or call you with messages urging you to return your absentee ballot. State law allows them to purchase lists of voters who have requested absentee ballots. Independent groups send out texts offering to send you an absentee ballot when it is really an absentee ballot application. Groups also send out mailers with absentee ballot forms which may appear to be from your municipal clerk’s office. Some of these forms are already partially filled out with names and addresses, some of which may be incorrect due to faulty mailing lists. Sometimes they claim you have not already requested an absentee ballot or their return address for clerks are incorrect. Also, the requirement for voters to provide a copy of their photo ID with the application is not always clearly stated. If a call or text claims to be coming from a government entity and offers an absentee ballot for people who cannot or do not want to go to the polls on Election Day, it may be a scam. Scammers may be using this as a ruse to collect a large amount of personal information and steal your identity. Never provide personally identifying information or account numbers to a person who contacts you unexpectedly.

For additional information on scams or consumer issues, or to file a consumer complaint, visit <http://datcp.wi.gov>, send an email to datcphotline@wi.gov or call DATCP at 1-800-422-7128.

For concerns regarding Wisconsin elections, visit <https://elections.wi.gov>.



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City of Kenosha Residents Can Deliver Completed Absentee Ballots to Dropboxes at One of Several Locations

- Kenosha Municipal Building - 625 52nd St.
 - Northside Library - 1200 27th Ave.
- Kenosha Transit Facility - 4303 39th Ave.
- Kenosha Water Utility - 4401 Green Bay Rd.
 - Southwest Library - 7979 38th Ave.
 - Uptown Library - 2419 63rd St.

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