

July 30, 2021



Dear friend,

We all know how important public education is. Over the last decade, there has been a near-constant battle here in Wisconsin between Democrats, who believe we should fully fund our neighborhood schools and provide them with all of the resources they need to successfully educate our children, and Republicans, who seem determined to cut public education funding to the bone while funneling more and more money to unaccountable voucher schools. We saw another example of this earlier this week. Governor Tony Evers called the Legislature into Special Session on Education Funding; it came as a surprise to no one when Republicans in the Senate and Assembly immediately “gaveled out” to end the session without a single word of debate. Today is recognized as “National Support Public Education Day”. While this is important every day, I encourage you to take a second today to show your support for our local schools and the teachers, faculty and staff who do such important work. Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

In Case You Missed It

small business **SPOTLIGHT**



Racine's Hometown Pharmacy Treats Customers Like Family, Play Important Role in Covid Vaccination

HOMETOWN
PHARMACY

3900 ERIE STREET
RACINE, WI 53402



Big and small cities across Wisconsin are full of big box pharmacy stores; in some places, it seems like there is one on every corner. While there is certainly a value in these stores, smaller, independent pharmacies offer a familiarity and personal touch that the big chains can't match. That's one of the things that make Racine's Hometown Pharmacy so special. This has proven especially true during the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine. Racine Hometown is one of more than 70 Hometown Pharmacies, which are independently owned and focus on offering personalized care for their patients; the Racine location, owned and operated by Jeremy Laffin, opened in November 2017. Racine Hometown was one of the early local leaders in the number of vaccinations it distributed each day; part of this is due to the ease in scheduling an appointment. While many larger vaccine providers required that you book an appointment online, Racine Hometown had staff members on hand to schedule appointments. The pharmacy also offered vaccinations to local senior living complexes and partnered with St. Patrick Parish to offer a vaccination clinic targeting minorities, particular Spanish-speakers. Going above and

beyond, Laffin and his staff even scheduled some home vaccination visits for those who can't get out of their homes. These little touches make Racine's Hometown Pharmacy unique and special. Check them out [online](#) and on [Facebook](#).



State Dept. of Health Services Warns “We’re on the Path to a 4th Surge”

The Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services is urging anyone who hasn't already to get the Covid-19 vaccination and asking people in Covid hotspots, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks indoors as the Delta variant continues to drive an uptick in new Covid cases. The new guidance is in line with that issued earlier this week by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition, state and federal health officials say all students, teachers, staff and visitors to K-12 schools buildings should wear masks indoors at all times for safety.

Over the last week, the state's seven-day average of new cases climbed to nearly 500, more than twice what it was last week and seven times what it was a month ago. The number of new confirmed cases got as high as 983 on Tuesday, the highest in a single day since April 8, 2021.



Local governments, organizations and businesses are trying to adjust to the growing number of cases. The City of Racine is once again requiring masks inside City buildings; this includes employees and members of the public. Schools in the UW System, looking to resume in-person instruction in the fall, aren't requiring anyone to be vaccinated for Covid-19, but most, if not all, campuses plan to require weekly Covid testing for unvaccinated students. State Sen. Steve Nass (R-Whitewater), who co-chairs the Legislature's Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules (JCRAR), says he plans to block the UW System from instituting Covid-19 testing, masking and vaccination protocols on campuses across the state. Nass said that JCRAR will vote remotely on Tuesday, Aug. 3, to block the UW's virus protocols.

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Celebrating the 31st Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became law on July 26, 1990. The ADA is widely regarded as one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation. It prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex and gender, national origin, age or religion. The ADA is probably most closely associated in many people's minds with curb cuts, ramps, chair lifts, elevators and other facility improvements. While progress has certainly been made, it's important to recognize that we still have work to do to preserve these hard-earned rights and to continue moving forward. In Wisconsin and many other states, activists and advocates used the occasion of the anniversary to highlight the impact that new voter suppression proposals and laws would have on voters with disabilities. Many of these bills would create new barriers and impact the voting rights of thousands of Wisconsinites with a disability, older adults and other voters. For a truly representative government, the goal should be to make it easy for every legal voter to participate.



Gov. Evers Calls Special Session on School Funding; Republicans End it in Seconds

Following up on his promise to push for more funding for public schools following signing of the state budget, Governor Evers called a Special Session of the Legislature on that very issue. The Governor had put forth a plan to invest \$550 million, which he had previously freed up through partial budget vetoes, into K-12, special education and higher education spending. The Special Session Call gave a start time of 9:01 am on Tuesday, July 27. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) had already called the Assembly into session at that time in an attempt to override the Governor's veto of a bill to end federal supplemental Covid unemployment benefits. Following the failure of the veto override attempt, Republican leaders

in both the Assembly and Senate quickly gaveled in to begin the Special Session before immediately gaveling out to end it, without a single word of discussion or debate.



Federal Eviction Moratorium Coming to an End, Help Still Available

After several extensions, the federal moratorium on evictions is coming to an end on July 31. Experts fear that we could see a spike in evictions nationwide over the coming months. Here in Wisconsin, there is still rental assistance help available to those who qualify. The Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance program, created by Governor Tony Evers and funded by federal Covid relief funds, provides up to 15 months of assistance with existing or overdue rent and utility bills, including internet costs. The program is administered locally by the Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency; more information is available [here](#).



City of Kenosha Receives \$4.9 Million in Federal Funds for Innovation Neighborhood Project

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration has awarded the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood project \$4.9 million for infrastructure improvements. The grant, to be matched with \$7.4 million from the city, is expected to create 1,000 jobs and generate \$500 million in private investment. The funding is an important step for the city in moving forward with plans for the project. Following the announcement, Governor Tony Evers, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin and Congressman Bryan Steil all thanked the Biden administration for federal support for the project.



Federal Child Tax Credit Payments Have Begun

Payments for the federal child tax credit have begun going out to families across the country. Many people have questions about whether their families are eligible for the credit, how it works, etc. Here is a bit of information that might be helpful:

- The federal Child Tax Credit was expanded and made refundable by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), signed into law by President Biden. ARPA raised the maximum credit in 2021 to \$3,600 per child under age 6 and to \$3,000 per child ages 6 through 17. Qualifying families will receive half of their credit in advance, divided into monthly payments, and the rest as a refund on their 2021 income tax return. Because the credit is now fully refundable, eligible families can get it even if they owe no federal income tax.
- ARPA also lowered income limits for the Child Tax Credit. Qualifying families will have incomes less than \$75,000 for a single-filer parents; \$112,500 for head of household filers; or \$150,000 for joint filers. Above these income amounts, the credit is reduced by \$50 for each \$1,000 over these limits.
- To qualify, a child must be under age 18 at the end of 2021. The child must be your own child; a stepchild; or a foster child placed with you by a court or authorized agency. You can also claim your brother or sister or stepbrother or stepsister. You can also claim nieces, nephews and grandchildren if they meet all other requirements.
- To qualify, a child cannot have provided more than half of his or her own financial support during the tax year.
- To qualify, you must claim the child as a dependent on your tax return. The child must also be a U.S. citizen, a U.S. national, or a U.S. resident alien.
- Finally, the child must have lived with you for more than half of the tax year for which you claim the credit, with limited exceptions.
 - You can find more about the credit and how to qualify [here](#).
- **If you or someone you know is eligible for the federal child tax credit but hasn't begun receiving payments or think there is a problem with your credit, contact Congressman Bryan Steil and his staff for assistance. Congressman Steil has offices in Kenosha (262-654-1901) and Racine (262-637-0510); you can also email him through his website, <https://steil.house.gov/>.**