



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

Dear Wisconsinites:

Thank you for reaching out to our offices with your questions or concerns about COVID-19. Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes and I have been so impressed, but frankly not surprised, by everyone's willingness to rise to the challenges we face and adjust. I want to thank you for stepping up and chipping in. Wisconsinites are helpers by nature; it's what we do, folks. Wisconsinites have demonstrated time and again that when times get tough, we can and will rally together to take care of each other.

The most important way you can help is to stay at home as much as you possibly can. I cannot stress this enough. There are folks working around the clock to keep us all safe — our healthcare workers, first responders, farmers, manufacturers, grocery store employees—and they can't stay home. We need those folks to stay healthy so they can continue to serve our communities. So please, only leave your home if it is absolutely necessary.

As of March 20, 206 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Wisconsin and 3,455 individuals tested negative.¹ Unfortunately, on March 19, the Department of Health Services (DHS) and I confirmed the first two deaths in Wisconsin due to COVID-19, followed by the third death on March 20. DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm and I want to extend our condolences on behalf of the state to the loved ones who are impacted by these tragedies, and want to assure you we are taking every precaution to prevent the spread of this virus. We are also working diligently with our local and federal partners to provide the most accurate, up-to-date information available.

On March 12, I signed [Executive Order 72](#), which declared a statewide public health emergency for COVID-19. Over the past week, I have directed several state agencies to issue orders and guidance regarding flexibility in [insurance coverage, school closures, bans on mass gatherings, security of correctional institutions, protecting folks from losing access to water, electricity, and gas utilities, increasing access to unemployment insurance](#) for those who need it, and [protection against price gouging](#).

As the situation continues to evolve, so does the guidance that our state agencies provide. On March 20, the DHS issued [Emergency Order 8](#), which clarifies the previously issued moratorium on mass gatherings. This order is intended to increase social distancing practices across different businesses and professions, encouraging individuals to maintain a distance of six feet or more between people and avoiding all direct physical contact. The order includes a list of circumstances that may be exempted, including, childcare locations, banks, grocery stores and their supply chains, healthcare facilities, government functions, media and news organizations, and polling places. Please consult the order for specific clarifications on these exemptions.

On March 19, the Wisconsin National Guard announced that it has mobilized approximately 300 troops to help provide further state support, if needed. Pursuant to Gov. Evers' executive order declaring a state of emergency, the Adjutant General activated the Wisconsin National Guard as necessary to help assist the state's response to the public health emergency. See the Wisconsin National Guard's announcement [here](#).

Our teams have been in lock step coordination with the DHS, Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), and all of Wisconsin's state agencies as we have elevated to a Level 1 State of Emergency. As of March 19, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) stood up five Task Force teams to assess and address specific needs across the state. These groups include specimen collection, testing lab capacity, childcare needs, field hospitals and surge capacity, and isolation facilities. Each of these groups will focus on resources the state currently has, assess needs of each individual group, and work with partners to develop a solution to proceed. I can reassure you that we have pooled our resources and will

continue to work in coordination to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. If a business or organization in your community needs supplies, like Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), they should reach out to the local [WEM County Director](#).

Information is changing rapidly, and it can be confusing and challenging to keep up in this 24-hour news cycle. Given this, I wanted to provide you all with an update that hopefully answers many of the questions and dispels any misinformation that you may be hearing. My office has compiled three lists of FAQs that are being updated regularly to reflect the most up-to-date guidance. We currently have FAQ documents available on [mass gatherings](#), [K-12 school closures](#), and [child care setting restrictions](#). Please refer to these documents when you have questions.

Please continue to find the most current information on the [DHS website](#), which has guidance that is updated regularly for travel, self-quarantine, and school districts, as well as other important information. We have created a new site that houses resources to help direct folks to resources at our state agencies. Please share this website widely: www.wisconsin.gov/covid19.

Finally, I know many folks have questions about our election on April 7. Moving the election is a complex issue—it isn't just a primary election, it's a general election to fill positions that are scheduled to take office in the next few months. Our focus right now is on encouraging people to cast an absentee ballot to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to safely participate and vote in the spring election. You can find information to request your absentee ballot [here](#).

DHS is working with local and tribal health officers, health care providers, and other partners to adjust the response to COVID-19 as needed. As always, the public should follow simple steps to avoid getting sick and help stop the spread of the virus, including:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Avoiding touching your face;
- Staying home when able;
- Avoiding gatherings of 10 or more people; and
- Practicing social distancing.

As we continue to receive updates on the status of COVID-19, my administration will continue to share the most accurate and current information. Thank you again for reaching out to our offices.

Sincerely,



Tony Evers
Governor



Mandela Barnes
Lt. Governor