

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Kathy Ronchi, Health Officer

Douglas County Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health Unit Recognizes Community Spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin and the recent positive case in Bayfield County.

Superior, Douglas County—On Tues., March 17, 2020, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced that community spread of COVID-19 has occurred in Wisconsin. This means that there are people who have tested positive who have no exposures to a known case nor did they travel to a location where there is known community spread. No resident of Douglas County has tested positive for COVID-19 as of today. Updated numbers of positive cases per county and locations where community spread is being seen are updated on the [DHS Outbreaks website](#) daily at 2 p.m.

Social distancing is a strategy to limit the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel (new) coronavirus. This is a conscious effort to reduce contact between people to slow the spread of the virus. Social distancing will help keep you, your family, and our community from increased risk of exposure.

“Even if you are symptom free and not part of an at-risk group, you still need to change your lifestyle starting today,” said Kathy Ronchi, Health Officer. “The number of confirmed cases in Wisconsin reminds all of us about the importance of social distancing and maintaining good hygiene to prevent the spread of disease.”

According to DHS, avoid public places. If you cannot avoid public spaces, stay six feet away from other people. Stay home as much as possible and think about how you can decrease close contacts and crowded environments while COVID-19 is spreading through our communities.

Douglas County Public Health is closely monitoring this outbreak. We are working with our local, state, and federal partners to deal quickly and effectively in the event people have symptoms or have been around people who have been infected with the new coronavirus. We are prepared to provide guidance to anyone who may become ill and will continue to work with our community to prevent further spread of the virus.

The health department wants everyone know that while the risk of getting the illness remains low, people should follow simple steps to avoid getting sick, including:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Stay home when sick.
- Practice social distancing.
- Avoid large public gatherings and crowds.

This is a rapidly evolving situation. Douglas county Public Health recommends the following information sources:

- CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- DHS: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm>
- Douglas County Webpage: <https://www.douglascountywi.org/1120/COVID-19-Coronavirus>
- Douglas County Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/douglascountywisconsin/>
- High Risk Individuals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
- Managing Anxiety & Stress during COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- United Way: 211

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