Douglas County Public Health

Douglas County Department of Health & Human Services
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COVID-19: *Continue to be Safer at Home*

On Wednesday, May 13, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court overturned the state's Safer at Home order. With this ruling, Douglas County businesses may now reopen **if** they have COVID-19 prevention strategies in place. "The order is gone, the virus is not." said Kathy Ronchi, Douglas County Health Officer. This was an abrupt change that required thoughtful development and implementation of a local plan.

Here is what we know:

Thousands (10,902) of people in Wisconsin have contracted COVID-19, thousands (1,908) have required hospitalization, and hundreds (421) have died. The numbers in neighboring Minnesota are even higher. COVID-19 is a virus that spreads through droplets from those infected who may or may not have symptoms. We must use the tools we have available to minimize the spread of the virus and the disease, destruction, and death it can cause.

Douglas County has had 868 people test negative and 12 people test positive for COVID-19. The most recent case being an infant with a mother who also tested positive for the disease. While we may not have the numbers of infections and deaths as other regions, COVID-19 remains a threat to the most vulnerable people in our community. With this in mind, the Douglas County plan includes recommendations that are in alignment with the Safer at Home disease prevention strategies.

What you can do:

1. Stay at home if you are sick; contact your health provider for a COVID-19 test
2. Minimize close physical contact with those outside of your household
3. Minimize travel, especially to areas considered "viral hotspots" within and beyond our state borders
4. Wear a fabric face covering if you must be in public
5. Maintain 6-foot distances with others whenever possible
6. Minimize congregating in groups of more than 20 people
7. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
8. Avoid touching your face
9. Comply with local public health COVID-19 isolation and quarantine orders
10. If you choose to visit public places, be prepared to avoid crowds and sanitize hands when leaving.

What businesses must do:

Businesses must take action to protect their workforce and customers. Follow the guidance documents available through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. (WEDC.ORG)

1. Learn about and implement COVID-19 prevention strategies as outlined by WEDC:
    https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines/

2. Train staff in COVID-19 prevention strategies to protect themselves as well as your customers by following CDC guidelines.
   https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html
3. Hold your customers responsible for maintaining social distancing strategies while visiting your establishment
4. Environmental Health staff is prepared to assist licensed businesses in developing COVID-19 plans. Please contact our office for guidance at 715-395-1304

What Public Health will do:
1. Monitor the Wisconsin Electronic Communicable Disease Surveillance System (WEDSS) for COVID-19 test results daily
2. Contact tracing, isolation and quarantine orders
3. Monitor for and respond to local COVID-19 outbreak
4. Provide guidance for businesses as well as general public
5. Communicate the local COVID-19 status regularly
6. Issue mandatory orders if compliance with guidelines are not followed and the community is placed at risk

We are in this together. We can choose to protect ourselves and each other, and thereby protect our community and economy, by changing our behavior in accordance with the actions listed above.

Check the Douglas County web page for updates and alerts.
- Douglas County COVID-19 Dashboard: https://www.douglascountywi.org/1124/COVID-19-Updates
- Douglas County Webpage: https://www.douglascountywi.org/
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services COVID-19 :
  https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19
- CDC Decision Tree for opening bars and restaurants:
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/restaurants-and-bars-decision-tree.pdf