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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMUNITY SPREAD AND BEING SAFER AT HOME

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Stevens Point, WI—Confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 continue to increase at a rapid rate across Wisconsin. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Wisconsin, along with many other states, has widespread community transmission of COVID-19. There are not enough resources to do widespread testing for COVID-19, so there are likely unidentified positive cases in Wisconsin communities. The term community spread, or community transmission is defined by the CDC as meaning that the source of infection is unknown. It occurs when a person's illness cannot be traced back to a certain individual or recent travel, indicating that the infected person was likely infected within their own community.

Governor Evers' Safer at Home order is in place to protect the public. This means that only essential businesses can remain open and that travel is restricted to the essential business where you work or for a different essential task, such as grocery shopping. Conducting these essentials errands should only be completed once per week by one person in your household. If you are a single-parent household, plan ahead to limit the trips you must take with your children. We encourage any community member with questions or concerns about essential and non-essential businesses to read through the [Safer at Home FAQ document](https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/Safer%20at%20Home%20FAQ%203.24.20.pdf) (<https://evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/Safer%20at%20Home%20FAQ%203.24.20.pdf>).

"As the number of confirmed cases continues to increase, it is extremely important that we continue to observe the Safer at Home Order," says Gary Garske, Health Officer, Portage County Division of Public Health. "Keep practicing social distancing and avoiding non-essential travel. Essential travel is defined as traveling for work, medical appointments, groceries, and pharmacy needs. With the weather getting nicer it is important to avoid activities where people can congregate even outdoors, as this is not maintaining safe social distancing and helps the COVID-19 virus spread within our community. Please stay at home as much as possible and let's help protect one another and the community."

During this time, it is critical to follow Safer at Home and to take every precaution you can to protect yourself and the community. We understand how disruptive this is to daily life. The health and wellbeing of our community is Portage County Division of Public Health's top priority. Please do your part and stay home. Continue to check-in on those who are most vulnerable and isolated during this time by calling or video chatting often. If you have questions or immediate needs related to COVID-19, call 2-1-1 or text COVID-19 to 211-211. For up-to-date information, please visit the following links:

Portage County's COVID-19 website at <https://www.co.portage.wi.us/home>

The COVID-19 site at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>

Portage County Division of Public Health Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/PortageCountyDPH/>

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