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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Badger Bounce Back Plan**

On April 16 Governor Evers directed the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to extend the Safer at Home order until May 26 or until a superseding order is issued. Due to community efforts so far, Safer at Home *is* working. DHS has reported limiting physical contact between people is the best strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19 and it is saving lives. Wisconsin has seen a decrease in the exponential growth in the number of positive cases since Safer at Home was put into place on March 25. Wisconsin's rate of double infections was 3.4 days in early March before Safer at Home. Over the past two weeks, the rate of doubling infections is now approximately 12 days. The purpose of the order is to have as few cases as possible to help protect those who are at high risk for contracting the virus with detrimental effects and ensuring that our healthcare systems can provide optimal care to those in need.

Thankfully Portage County has maintained relatively few positive cases; however, with less than one percent of people in Wisconsin having been tested and even fewer in Portage County, it is possible people may be infected and spreading COVID-19 inadvertently. Therefore, we need to maintain being Safer at Home, not simply to protect ourselves, but also those who are most vulnerable, such as our senior community members, who make up 17 percent of our population.

Additionally, on April 20, the Department of Health Services in partnership with Governor Evers published the Badger Bounce Back Plan and *Boxing in Covid-19 So We Can Re-Open Wisconsin*. The goal of the Badger Bounce Back plan is to decrease cases and deaths to a low level and increase capacity in our healthcare system, so the phased reopening of businesses is possible. In order to re-open Wisconsin and for the Badger Bounce Back Plan to work, we must have access to more testing and labs, expand contact tracing, aggressively track the spread, have access to more personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies, and increase health care system capacity. None of the steps in the Badger Bounce Back Plan are possible without the other steps, therefore if we fail in one area, all other areas will too. It's important to note that with increased testing capacity, the state will likely see more positive cases of COVID-19. This is to be expected and should not be taken as a sign that the efforts put in place aren't working.

Once we all can meet the criteria established by the Badger Bounce Back Plan, the Safer at Home Order will slowly be lifted throughout Wisconsin allowing people to interact, and more importantly getting everyone back to work. For this to happen more testing is needed across Wisconsin. With more testing, more testing materials and PPE are needed, along with additional contract tracing and isolation of identified positive individuals and quarantine of close

contacts for positive cases. All without taxing our current medical systems. This causes a shift from having Wisconsinites “boxed in” to “boxing in” the virus instead. These criteria are currently being examined as assessed in communities across the state. See the below image for more information on what boxing-in COVID-19 means for Wisconsin.

## Boxing in COVID-19 So We Can Re-Open Wisconsin

It is now time to move from our initial response to COVID-19, which has been to keep all Wisconsinites at home to prevent spreading this disease. Once we reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and meet the Badger Bounce Back criteria, we can begin to allow people to interact, and more importantly get Wisconsinites back to work.

### 1. Symptoms

Over the course of 14-days we consistently see fewer and fewer people reporting flu-like illnesses and COVID-like cases. This is called a downward trajectory.

### 2. Cases

Over the course of 14 days we consistently see fewer and fewer positive cases of COVID-19 as a percentage of total tests.

### 3. Health Care System

Our hospitals can treat all patients without crisis care and there are robust testing programs in place for at-risk health care workers, with decreasing numbers of infected health care workers.

### 4. Testing

Every Wisconsin resident who has symptoms of COVID-19 will be able to get a lab test. Results will be reported to the patient and public health within 48 hours of collection.

### 5. Contact Tracing

Testing without contact tracing will not result in controlling the spread of the virus. Every Wisconsin resident who tests positive for COVID-19 is interviewed within 24 hours of test results and their contacts are interviewed within 48 hours of test results.

### 6. Protective Equipment

All health care and public safety entities will need to have adequate PPE and supplies to conduct COVID-19 testing, patient care, and public safety work.



Everyone is asked to continue to be Safer at Home by following these simple steps to reduce your risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and limit spread of the virus by:

- Frequent and thorough handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoiding touching your face.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Practicing social and physical distancing of at least 6 feet from others.
- Avoiding large public gatherings and crowds greater than 10.
- Wisconsinites are encouraged to stay close to home and strongly discouraged from unnecessary travel. Essential travel is permitted for getting to and from a job related to an essential service, going to medical appointments, going to a pharmacy, and to go grocery shopping or shop for essential items.
- Wearing a face mask when out in public for essential tasks.

For the latest information and guidance on COVID-19, visit the CDC's website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) or the DHS website (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>).

If you have questions or immediate needs related to COVID-19, call 2-1-1 or text COVID-19 to 211-211.

For the latest information about COVID-19 in Portage County visit:

Portage County's COVID-19 website (<https://www.co.portage.wi.us/department/health-and-human-services/division-of-public-health/covid-19-coronavirus-disease-2019/-fsiteid-1>)

Portage County Division of Public Health Updates and Alerts

(<https://www.co.portage.wi.us/department/health-and-human-services/division-of-public-health/covid-19-coronavirus-disease-2019/division-of-public-health-updates-and-alerts>)

Portage County Division of Public Health Facebook page

(<https://www.facebook.com/PortageCountyDPH/>)

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