



RAYMOND F. PRZYBELSKI, DIRECTOR  
(715) 345-5350 or Toll Free (866) 920-2525  
FAX (715) 345-5966

RUTH GILFRY HUMAN RESOURCES BUILDING  
817 WHITING AVENUE  
STEVENS POINT, WI 54481-5292

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[ccpublichealth@co.portage.wi.us](mailto:ccpublichealth@co.portage.wi.us)

## PORTAGE COUNTY REACHES 500<sup>TH</sup> CASE OF COVID-19

August 24, 2020

Stevens Point, WI—On August 22, 2020, Portage County Health and Human Services-Division of Public Health (PCHHS-DPH) confirmed its 500<sup>th</sup> positive case of COVID-19. Additionally, on the same day, PCHHS-DPH confirmed the first death associated with COVID-19 for a Portage County resident. As of 2:00 p.m. on Friday, August 21, 2020, Portage County has 48 (10%) active COVID-19 cases and 449 (90%) recovered cases. The largest number of confirmed positive cases in Portage County continue to be those between the ages of 20-29, or 32% of cases.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has released data that identifies Portage County as having a high case rate and a high COVID-19 activity level (Source: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>). Statewide, Wisconsin is seeing significant COVID-19 activity, and data shows that this is partly due to activities such as gatherings. According to Wisconsin DHS, “Data obtained from contact tracing calls indicate that the percent of people with confirmed cases of COVID-19 who reported attending a gathering, party, or other meet up with people outside their home in the past two weeks grew from 7% of cases in May to 21% of cases in June and 20% of cases in July.” In response, DHS has launched a new tool to help think through the safety of the desired activity or gathering and how your decisions might impact others, how to reduce your risk, and other activities to do instead.

**Access the tool here:** <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/decision.htm>

On Thursday, July 30, Governor Evers declared a Public Health Emergency and issued Emergency Order #1 mandating face coverings indoors or in enclosed spaces, other than one’s home. Face coverings are strongly recommended when it is not possible to maintain physical distancing and should be practiced with other preventive measures. While wearing a face covering is important to slow the spread of COVID-19, it is also important to remember that it is not a community members’ place to judge or question someone who is not wearing a face covering. Additionally, community members must also respect those who do follow the order by wearing a face covering. If you do encounter someone who is unable to wear a face covering when out, make sure to practice good physical distancing.

**Press release from Governor Evers:**

[https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/2980ec0?fbclid=IwAR2kKmoy5gAUHf0GrpPNV6sF11D\\_AeMiYxuaajxcXjg9ffk45pxXFPZ7\\_wxY](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/2980ec0?fbclid=IwAR2kKmoy5gAUHf0GrpPNV6sF11D_AeMiYxuaajxcXjg9ffk45pxXFPZ7_wxY)

**As positive COVID-19 cases continue to increase, practicing the following safety precautions continues to be the most effective way to reduce the spread of COVID-19:**

- **Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available**
- **Cover coughs and sneezes**

- **Avoid touching your face in public**
- **Practice physical distancing of at least 6 feet from people not in your household**
- **Avoid large gatherings**
- **Avoid non-essential travel**
- **Wear a cloth face covering**
- **Stay home when sick**

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever and chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Fatigue and body/muscle aches
- Diarrhea, vomiting and nausea

The community's response to following COVID-19 safety precautions is one of the keys to slowing the virus spread and improving the wellbeing of our community. If you have questions, please call or email our department at (715) 345-5350, option 8, or [PCPublicHealth@co.portage.wi.us](mailto:PCPublicHealth@co.portage.wi.us). **For additional information, visit Portage County's COVID-19 data and information dashboard at this link: <https://coronavirus-response-portage-county-portagecowi.hub.arcgis.com/>.** **For more information regarding COVID-19 activity levels throughout the state, visit the Wisconsin's Department of Health Services website at: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>.**

If you have general COVID-19 questions call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898211 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

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