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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PORTAGE COUNTY REACHES 1000TH CASE OF COVID-19

September 16, 2020

Stevens Point, WI—On September 16, 2020, Portage County Health and Human Services–Division of Public Health (PCHHS-DPH) confirmed its 1000th positive case of COVID-19. As of 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, Portage County has 1,004 total positive cases; with 205 (20%) active COVID-19 cases, 796 (79%) recovered cases, and 3 (less than 1%) fatalities. The largest number of confirmed positive cases in Portage County continue to be those between the ages of 20-29, or 30% 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>). As of August 24th, the 500th case was reported and within 24 days the amount of cases in Portage County has doubled to 1,000 cases. “The rate of cases that are being reported provides strong evidence of community spread,” says Gary Garske, Health Officer and Division of Public Health Manager. In response to the increased rate of COVID-19 cases being reported in Wisconsin, DHS has launched a tool to help residents make decision about the safety of their desired activity or gathering, help residents identify ways to reduce COVID-19 exposure risk, and it provides ideas for activities to do instead.

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

Governor Evers declared a Public Health Emergency on July 30th and issued Emergency Order #1. This order mandates all Wisconsin residents to wear a face covering 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

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. **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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