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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 23, 2020

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

Over the past weeks, we have seen a significant increase in positive COVID-19 cases in Portage County and across the state. In less than a month, Portage County's cases have doubled from 500 to over 1,000 cases of COVID-19 and experienced deaths due to the virus. Due to this significant increase in cases, Portage County Public Health staff has been working at maximum capacity in trying to contact positive individuals, but the surge in positive cases is beyond current capacity, and therefore response time to new cases and close contacts has been delayed. Thank you for your patience during this unprecedented time!

"As positive cases continue to be identified, we are giving our best effort to keep up and contact the cases and their contacts as best as we possibly can" state Gary Garske, Portage County Health Officer. "In order to slow community spread, now more than ever, we need people to stay home, especially when feeling ill, limit their social circles, and wear a mask."

As Portage County continues to see the surge in cases, it is important for persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 to take these important steps while waiting to hear from the health department:

- Isolate yourself at home- do not go to work, school, or public areas
- Separate from family members and pets to protect them
- Wear a face covering if around anyone
- Postpone all non-essential appointments
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Monitor your symptoms including taking your temperature twice a day
- Do not share personal household items
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough/sneeze
- Notify those who are identified as close contacts
- Contact your employer and/or any possible establishments

Those that have been notified they are possible close contacts are advised to stay home and monitor for symptoms, such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Staying home and keeping social circles small will help slow the spread of the virus to others in the community. This in turn will help to keep our schools and businesses stay open and community members safe during the pandemic.

To view the current status of COVID-19 activity in Portage County visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm> .

If you have questions or would like additional guidance, please call or email our department at (715) 345-5907 or [PCPublicHealth@co.portage.wi.us](mailto:PCPublicHealth@co.portage.wi.us).

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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