



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

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CONTACT: pcpublichealth@co.portage.wi.us

Right Person, Right Test, Right Time

As the Coronavirus Pandemic continues, Portage County Health and Human Services has entered into a partnership with Wood and Marathon County Health Departments. This collaborative effort between the Health Departments is in conjunction with our local health systems of Aspirus, Ascension, and Marshfield Clinics with the goal to create a fluid working response that will assist with testing efforts, identify gaps in testing capabilities, and allow all of the agencies to work together to bridge obstacles. Each agency has selected a Testing Coordinator to help facilitate the process, and help provide the best response for our communities.

The focus of this is to test the right person, using the right test, at the right time. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services recently stated, "Aggressive case finding through testing all individuals with high risk exposures to COVID-19 remains a key strategy for containing further spread of infection." Our state and even our country have been facing challenges when it comes to testing for COVID-19, including shortages of personnel, supplies and capabilities. Working together will allow us to use supplies and personnel in a more collective fashion, adding on to the existing partnerships Portage County has fostered from the early stages of the pandemic and allow us to continue to provide the best testing response possible. The Wisconsin National Guard's deployment has been extended through the end of the year, although extremely limited.

Working together with other local agencies will allow us to provide the best response to meet our community needs. Portage County Health and Human Services is part of a pilot program which will help with the development of this response and provide a testing resource for our community members. The testing has been scheduled for Tuesdays from 1:00pm to 5:00pm and Thursdays from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the back carport of the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Portage County building, located at 1519 Water Street Stevens Point, WI starting Tuesday, October 6th. This testing is for all Wisconsin Residents who are 5 years old and older and are experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19 or are identified as a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and their last contact with the individual was 5-7 days prior. It is important when accessing this testing location to access it from Arlington Place, turning South onto Elk Street and the entrance will be clearly marked. The goal of the Health Departments will be to collect 300 tests a week. The tests will be collected using the electronic

data system called COVID Connect, with local EMS helping staff the testing sites. The counties have also requested for the Wisconsin National Guard to establish recurring testing for an additional 300 individuals weekly on an alternate day at the same location. As the tri-counties continue to develop this response, it is important to remember that this response will always be under development to adapt to the changes of the pandemic and the community.

For those who use the ADRC Testing Event, they can call the COVID Hotline at 1-866-419-6988 for their test results if they had not received them within 5 days. Test results will be emailed to those with a valid email or by phone call within 3-7 days. Portage County will follow up with those without emails and/or are positive.

As it has been recognized that there is a national/statewide shortage of testing, there are important measures that one may take to help protect themselves and the ones around them. As seen in recent cases, large gatherings continue to be a key source to many identified positive cases and outbreaks. Limiting one's social circle and limiting the number of gathers attended or hosted is a key measure one can take to lessen their ability to become in contact with the virus and spread it to others. Although there may be a shortage to testing supplies and locations, it is still vital for those who are experiencing any of the following symptoms to go and get tested:

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

If one is experiencing any symptoms believed to be those of COVID-19, it is recommended that they receive testing. Currently testing is available at these local entities:

- Ascension- testing symptomatic individuals *currently not testing asymptomatic individuals, unless one is a close contact; and all must be an established patient. Complete the online [self-assessment](#). 1-800-362-9900
- Aspirus- will test symptomatic and close contacts. Call 1-844-568-0701.
- Marshfield- currently only testing pre-op, travel requirements, student clearance, and known exposures 4-5 days post exposure. Call 844-342-6276.

Vulnerable populations, including the elderly and immunocompromised, have increased risk for serious and life-threatening complications, but anyone can develop symptoms or become seriously ill if infected with COVID-19. It is also important to remember that COVID-19 can also be spread by those who are not experiencing symptoms.

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. 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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