



BREAKING NEWS

- A bipartisan group of legislative leaders met with Governor Evers late this afternoon to discuss steps to safely reopen the state.
 - Speaking with members of the press today, Evers acknowledge the meeting was arranged after Assembly Republican leaders sent him a letter on Friday outlining the concerns they had heard from business leaders around the state.
 - Following this afternoon's meeting, Assembly Speaker Robin Vos said in a statement the meeting was "a good initial discussion," stressing the fact that the state needs a safe, gradual, and regional reopening. "We shouldn't have a Republican plan or a governor's plan, we need a Wisconsin plan that the entire state can get behind." Read the full statement here.

Another lawsuit was filed late this afternoon against Governor Evers' Safer at Home order that argues the order violates constitutional rights to free speech, worship, and travel.

- The petitioners are asking the state's Supreme Court to intervene, arguing Evers' order is discriminatory as it allows some activities to occur without numerical restrictions, but prohibits religious worship. Read the court filing here.
- Brought by two members of the public, one of the petitioners argues he would have participated in a protest at the state Capitol

on April 24 if Evers' order limiting non-essential travel were not in place.

- In a prepared statement today, the Evers administration said they will now work to expand access to testing for the COVID-19 virus.
 - The news comes after the administration noted last week that they were conducting far fewer tests each day than the state is currently able to process.
 - One step announced in today's statement was a goal of testing all residents and staff members at each of the state's long-term care facilities.
- According to the latest data available from the Department of Health Services, Wisconsin now has 8,236 confirmed positive cases of the COVID-19 virus and 340 confirmed deaths. 80,467 negative test results have been reported. DHS is also now providing information on the recovery status of COVID-19 confirmed cases – find the data here.
 - According to the Wisconsin Hospital Association, there are 348 total COVID-19 patients in our hospitals – a 4-patient decrease over the last 24 hours.
 - DHS has released new data on facility-wide public health investigations and outbreaks in areas across the state. Currently, there are 187 COVID-19 facility-wide investigations and outbreaks.
 - Click here for more information on COVID-19 data through DHS.

DAILY UPDATES – MAY 4, 2020

State Updates:

- Rep. John Nygren, along with 35 Assembly Republicans, sent a letter to the Department of Workforce Development today in response to the scores of contacts received by legislators about delays in state unemployment insurance claims.
 - In the letter, the lawmakers urge Department leadership to explore any and all options to expedite the turnaround time

for those filing claims, including pre-approving certain low-risk unemployment claims.

- The Department of Health Services today announced its secretary-designee Andre Palm has issued a new emergency order to prevent Medicaid members from losing coverage during the COVID-19 emergency.
 - In a release, the department notes the move helps the state capture additional federal dollar.
- On Sunday, the Wall Street Journal evaluated the response by each state's governor to the COVID-19 virus. Wisconsin's Tony Evers was one of only 4 governors to receiving a failing grade.
- Governor Evers issued a release thanking our Chinese sister state, Heilongjiang Province, for its donation of 10,000 procedural masks and 1,000 medical outfits over the weekend.
 - This comes after Foxconn Technology Group donated 100,000 procedural face masks to the state in April, and FEMA and the White House's Project Air Bridge have provided 2,118,000 masks, 128,378 face shields, 14,727 coveralls, 536,250 N95 respirators, 47,314,350 gloves, and 1,505,152 gowns to Wisconsin to date.
- After over 6 months of the Evers administration refusing to disclose requested records and requiring a lawsuit in order to follow the law, the administration has agreed to restore transparency in government and provide the requested records.
 - In a prepared statement, Evers suggested he was moving to settle the months-old suit so as to allow more time to focus on the COVID-19 response.
 - Rep. John Nygren, who had filed the initial open records request more than half a year ago, expressed frustration that it took legal action to ensure Gov. Evers would comply with state law. Read Nygren's statement here.

- Around 30 Citizen Soldiers from the Wisconsin National Guard helped with a community-based drive-through testing site for Buffalo County residents last week.
- City leaders in Milwaukee are estimating that the economic effect of the coronavirus pandemic will decrease revenues to the city by roughly \$6.7 million in both March and April.
 - The Legislative Fiscal Bureau has not yet released updated revenue projections for the state following the impacts of the COVID-19 and Safer at Home Order, however in a letter sent to President Trump, Gov. Evers estimates the state had lost as much as \$2 billion in revenues as of mid-April.
- The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) reports that 39,278 initial applications were filed for unemployment insurance last week.
 - Since the start of the pandemic, more than a half a million unemployment claims have been filed in Wisconsin – a sum that is 15 times greater than all claims filed during the same period just one year earlier.
 - DWD is currently receiving an unprecedented number of applications for benefits. In order to meet demand, those needing to file unemployment insurance claims are encouraged to do so through the Department’s website. A number of frequently asked questions and answers is also available on this site. The phone lines remain open to applicants, but they may experience longer-than-usual delays.
- Those seeking employment may still do so by registering on JobCenterofWisconsin.com. The website will continue to be updated often as new jobs arise.

Federal Updates:

- For the first time, agricultural producers are now eligible for the Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and EIDL Advance programs. More information can be found here.

- [FEMA released a fact sheet](#) on Saturday outlining existing efforts to ensure nursing homes across the country have PPE during the COVID-19 pandemic.
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Helpful Resources

- [The Assembly GOP Caucus has launched a GOP COVID-19 webpage](#). It will serve as a resource for up-to-date information, links to DHS and CDC information, graphics, and more.
- [The Federal Emergency Management Agency has created the Coronavirus Rumor Control page](#) to help folks distinguish between rumors and facts.

Education

- Governor Evers has directed the Department of Health Service to mandate a statewide closure of all K-12 schools. All schools will be closed beginning Wednesday, March 18th, and will remain closed through the rest of the 2019-20 school year.
- There are options for children who were participants in the Child Nutrition Program at school and may be facing food insecurity during the break.
 - [While School Food Authorities \(SFAs\) are not required to provide meals during a dismissal, they are encouraged to ensure that the needs of low-income children are met during extended school dismissals.](#)
 - Check with your local school districts for information regarding meals for children during the school closure.

Businesses

- Under Governor Evers' "Safer at Home" order, some businesses deemed "essential" may continue operation. [A Q&A and a listing of essential industries is available on the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's \(WEDC\) website.](#)

- Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC) has compiled a COVID-19 Employer Toolkit to help employers and workers navigate the recent state and federal policy changes related to essential businesses, unemployment insurance, paid medical leave, small business loans, and more. [Find the Toolkit here.](#)
- Businesses performing essential functions not included in the categories listed on the WEDC website, [may request such designation by submitting this online form to the agency.](#)
- [The Department of Health Services has provided guidance for employers on COVID-19.](#)
- [The federal Center for Disease Control has compiled interim guidance for businesses and employers.](#)
- [Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce has also developed a toolbox of guides](#) to help employers navigate the COVID-19 virus.
- For summaries on loan programs available to small businesses, [visit NCSL's breakdown here.](#)
- The Small Business Administration, in consultation with the Department of Treasury, has issued a [FAQ on Paycheck Protection Program loans.](#)

Mental Health

- [Resilient Wisconsin](#), a new page from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, has consolidated the latest mental and behavioral health self-care tools and trauma-informed practices.
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's COVID-19 webpage](#) includes advice and guidance from mental health and suicide prevention experts.
- [NAMI Wisconsin has launched a website with COVID-19 resources related to mental health.](#)

Dining

- Despite the Governor's orders to close all restaurants and bars, take-out and delivery services are still permissible.

- The [Wisconsin Restaurant Association](#) has worked to compile [a list of participating restaurants](#) offering such services.

Ways You Can Help

- Give Blood – [click here](#) to find a blood drive/donation center near you.
 - The Red Cross has indicated cancellations of blood appointments are at record highs. Encourage others to donate if they are healthy.
- Local food banks are asking for your assistance.
- The United Way and other [groups have created an online portal for those looking for volunteering opportunities in their community](#).
- [Help your local small businesses](#). Grab a meal for take-out or buy gift cards and shop online from local businesses to help them stay afloat during this time of uncertainty.
- Volunteer to pick up groceries or prescriptions for elderly in your community, or volunteer with a local organization who provides these services (i.e.: Meals on Wheels).
- Limit stockpiling, as grocery stores will remain open.

Services

- Internet:
 - [Charter is providing free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access for 60 days](#) to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription and at any service level up to 100 Mbps. To enroll, call 1-844-488-8395
 - [Comcast is increasing speeds from 15/2 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps for all customers, and new customers are receiving two months of free service](#). More information on Comcast's Internet Essentials program can be [found here](#).
 - [TDS is providing free broadband access](#) for new K-12, college student households for 60 days.
- Unemployment:

- Information relating to unemployment benefits and COVID-19 can be found on the [Dept. of Workforce Development's informational page](#).
 - Applicants are encourage to apply for benefits online.
- Housing:
 - The Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) has a [FAQ for homeowners, renters, and housing providers in response to COVID-19](#). The FAQ is being updated as new information arises.
- Kids:
 - [Scholastic offers free online courses for children](#).
 - [50 activities parents can do with their kids during shutdown](#).
 - The [Department of Children and Families has developed new resources](#) to connect essential workforce families with locally available childcare.
 - Essential workforce families in need should [fill out this form](#).
 - Families can search for available care [using this map](#).