

Respond Together Eau Claire

COVID-19 Progress Plan

June 24, 2020

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a significant threat that may continue for months or years until a vaccine is developed. The goals of *Respond Together Eau Claire*, a plan for the community, are to:

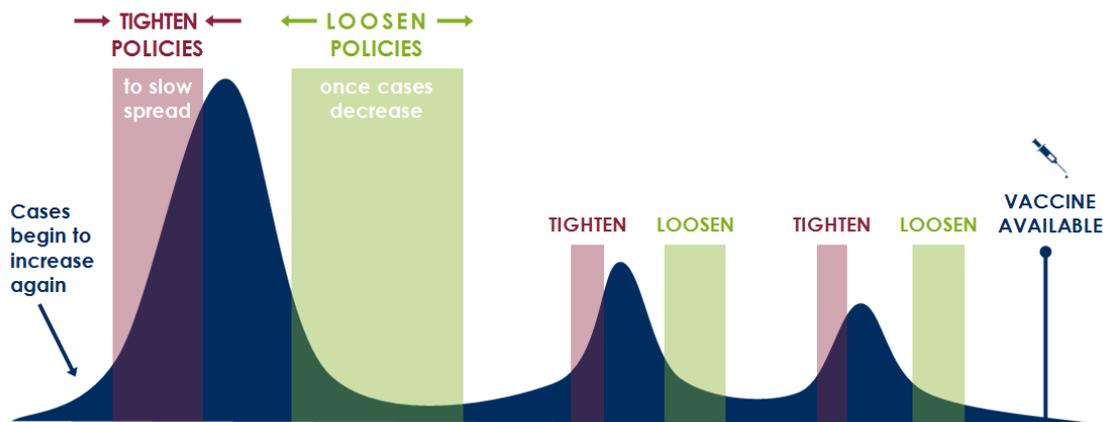
- Reduce the number of people who simultaneously contract COVID-19, leading to overwhelmed healthcare and public health systems, and
- Reduce the number of people who die from COVID-19.

In the absence of COVID-19 specific treatments or vaccine, containment and mitigation strategies are needed to slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives. These include contact tracing, isolation, quarantine, and physical distancing that are part of regular public health practice and recent public health orders. On March 25, 2020, the Wisconsin Safer at Home order took effect. On May 14, 2020, the Eau Claire City-County Health Department put into place the COVID-19 Prevention and Control Order following the overturn of the statewide Safer at Home order. The goal of the Eau Claire County order is to minimize the risk to Eau Claire County residents of experiencing a surge of COVID-19 cases.

This is a crucial time for Eau Claire County to continue to be vigilant and take actions that will decrease further spread of the disease at the individual, organizational, and community level. This requires everyone to take responsibility for slowing the spread of disease, to work together, and to support best practices. As long as the virus is in our community, the possibility of spread exists, particularly to our most vulnerable populations.

The steps for resuming normal operations and activities proposed in this plan are based on management of the highest-risk situations. Depending on the progress of disease in the community, this plan provides details for how to move forward toward fewer health and safety requirements, hold steady, or increase safety if disease is not able to be contained. *Respond Together Eau Claire* uses public health data and the best evidence available to minimize both a surge in cases and the need for increasing safety measures in our community.

The purpose of this plan is to aid local public health, city and county leadership, and everyone who lives, learns, works, prays, and plays in Eau Claire County to think about when and how various community-level activities can more safely happen, along with when and how mitigation strategies may be needed. This document is meant to supplement state or federal guidance with local data and considerations. It complements the White House plan for reopening, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' plan to reopen, and the guidance provided by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).



This illustration shows that as a surge of new cases is detected, measures to increase safety (red) can be put in place to reduce the spread of the virus. Following the 'peak' of cases, those policies can lift to move toward fewer safety requirements.

Roles in Responding Together for Community Health and Safety

We all have a critical role to play in meeting the goal of reducing disease spread and ultimately preventing deaths from COVID-19. By working together, we all can contribute to keeping people healthy and safe while moving Eau Claire County forward.

Individual Community Members

We ask everyone in Eau Claire County to:

- Practice good hygiene, including washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into an elbow
- Stay home when sick
- Keep your circle small by minimizing the total number of people who are within six ft of you
- Clean high-touch objects like doorknobs, remotes, cell phones, and light switches frequently
- Follow public health recommendations and population-level prevention strategies, such as maintaining physical distancing and wearing cloth face coverings

Public Health

Public health professionals have the responsibility of tracking the virus and working toward containment of this communicable disease. Some of the responsibilities of local public health include:

- Receiving positive test results from healthcare to conduct case investigation and contact tracing
- Ensuring quarantine and isolation of contacts and cases to decrease disease spread
- Putting in place population-level mitigation strategies and providing guidance for the safe reopening of our community, in alignment with state and national plans

- Providing technical assistance to businesses, congregate facilities, and individuals to implement infection control best practices and contain outbreaks
- Tracking progress on disease data and response capacity indicators
- Working with health care to assure testing and surge capacity
- Addressing equity in responding to this virus
- Communicating clearly with the public and all sectors involved in the response to reduce the spread of illness

Healthcare

Healthcare systems are on the frontlines of care, identifying people who test positive for COVID-19 and caring for them if their illness becomes severe. Additionally, as some of the largest employers in the region, occupational health and safety are also critical for overall community health. Specific responsibilities for healthcare include:

- Identifying positive COVID-19 cases through testing; at a minimum, testing symptomatic individuals and contacts of positive cases
- Collaborating with public health and local businesses to test other emerging priority populations
- Developing plans and increasing capacity in case of a surge, including PPE supplies, ICU capacity, and respiratory capacity
- Using infection control procedures to screen staff for symptoms, test for COVID-19, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in employees

Businesses and Community Partners

The business community and community partners play a critical role in the success and vibrancy of our community and economy. Safety for the workforce and patrons of local businesses are equally important. To move Eau Claire County forward, public and private sector responsibilities include:

- Protecting the health and safety of employees and customers through risk reduction strategies, such as those outlined in local orders
- Developing flexible sick leave policies and creating a culture in which employees can stay home when they are sick
- Monitoring staff for symptoms and working with local public health if an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19 or is a known contact to someone with COVID-19
- Implementing infection control policies, such as disinfecting surfaces frequently, keeping both employees and customers 6 feet apart, using cloth face coverings when appropriate, frequent handwashing or sanitizing, and other prevention measures
- Communicating to management, staff, and customers the importance of following prevention measures to prevent future outbreaks
- Reviewing state and national guidelines for business best practice including WEDC, WI Department of Health Services, and CDC.

Local Metrics for Disease Spread and Containment

When evaluating the types of safety measures needed to protect our community, we look at three categories of data. Initial metrics that will be monitored in Eau Claire County are listed below. In addition

to these metrics, additional measures will be monitored such as transmission dynamics (the “R” value of our epidemic), lab result reporting timeliness, outbreak monitoring within priority populations, capacity for supporting isolation/quarantine, and contact attempts of both cases and contacts. Active monitoring of real-time data-based metrics are critical. If metrics are not being met, mitigation strategies may be needed at the county level, or an even smaller scale (municipality, facility, or business) to address an identified hotspot. These metrics may change as additional data or guidance become available. The three areas for data tracking include:

Disease Occurrence

In order to control the spread of disease, it is critical to understand how many people are getting sick and the main ways in which they are getting sick (travel, contact with a sick individual, unknown, etc.). If the load of new cases is overwhelming, it is difficult to quickly contain the virus and reduce spread. A sustained, high testing level is a critical metric that ensures our disease occurrence data are meaningful. Testing is how we detect active infection, which leads to contact tracing and prevention of further disease transmission.

Healthcare

Along with knowing disease and testing data to monitor the course of the epidemic, it is vital that healthcare systems are equipped to manage patient care of COVID-19 and respond to a surge in cases. This capacity includes staff, protective equipment, and bed availability, as well as testing for healthcare workers.

Public Health Response

In order to contain disease, a robust public health response system is needed. Disease containment includes the ability to identify and isolate individuals who test positive to prevent further spread. Also critical to containment is rapid contact tracing, in which contacts who have been exposed by a positive case are identified and notified of the need to stay home for the incubation period of this disease, which is 14 days from exposure.

Respond Together Eau Claire Metrics:

Table 1. Local data is an indicator of disease occurrence as well as healthcare and public health capacity. These metrics are updated on our website covid19eauclaire.org

	Category	Measure	Thresholds
Disease Occurrence	Cases	Daily positive tests as a percent of total tests, averaged across most recent 14-day period	Green: Below 5% positivity Yellow: 5-10% positivity Red: Above 10% positivity
	Cases	During the last 28 days, percent change in average positive cases from days 1-14 to days 14-28 (most recent 14-day period).	Green: 10% decrease or more Yellow: -9.9% to +9.9% Red: 10% increase or more

	Category	Measure	Thresholds
Disease Occurrence	Outbreaks	New outbreak investigations in most recent 14-day period	Green: 0 new outbreak investigations Yellow: 1-2 new outbreak investigations Red: 3 or more new outbreak investigations
	Community spread	Proportion of contacted COVID-19 cases who don't know where they could have gotten COVID-19 in most recent 14-day period	Green: Fewer than 20% of cases don't know where they could have gotten COVID-19 Yellow: 20-30% cases don't know where they could have gotten COVID-19 Red: More than 30% cases don't know where they could have gotten COVID-19
	Surveillance	Stable or decrease of COVID-like syndromic cases reported within most recent 14-day period	Green: No significant increase in COVID-like syndromic cases for most recent 14 days Red: Significant increase in COVID-like syndromic cases for most recent 14 days
	Testing	Number of tests per 100,000 people per day over most recent 14-day period	Threshold to be determined by state
Healthcare	Hospital capacity	Robust testing in place for health care workers	Green: 100% of hospitals have arranged testing for all COVID-19 symptomatic clinical staff treating patients at the hospital in the past week Red: Less than 100% of hospitals have arranged testing for all COVID-symptomatic clinical staff treating patients at the hospital in the past week
	Hospital capacity	Treat all patients without crisis care	Green: 100% of hospitals answer "no" to all 3 questions Facility use status: the facility is damaged/unsafe or non-patient care areas are being used by the facility for patient care Staffing status: trained staff are unavailable or unable to adequately care for the volume of patients even with extension techniques Critical supply status: critical supplies are lacking, resulting in reallocation of life-sustaining resources and/or other extreme operating conditions Red: Yes to one or more questions
Public Health Response	Case contact	Proportion of cases contacted within 24 hours of test result in most recent 14-day period	Green: 100% of contacts reached within 24 hours of test result Yellow: 75-<100% of contacts reached within 24 hours of test result Red: <75% of contacts reached within 24 hours of test result
	Contact tracing	85% of contacts reached within 24 hours of case interview in most recent 14-day period	Green: 85% or more of contacts reached within 24 hours of case interview Yellow: 85% of contacts reached within 48 hours or case interview Red: <85% of contacts reached within 48 hours of case interview
	Number of contacts	Average number of contacts per case, over the last 14 days	No thresholds: general monitoring

Philosophy and Guiding Principles Behind Public Health Orders

The Eau Claire County COVID-19 Prevention and Control Order (the order) was issued by the Eau Claire City-County Health Department (ECCCHD) on May 14, 2020, following the Wisconsin Supreme Court Decision that overturned the statewide Safer at Home Order. The order addresses risk factors and the current understanding of COVID-19 transmission, as well as general communicable disease prevention and control principles. A general description of the principles behind the order provisions are provided below:

- 1) COVID-19 is highly contagious and readily transmitted through respiratory secretions, especially in close contact situations
- 2) The virus that leads to COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) can remain viable on surfaces for varying periods of time, but cleaning and disinfection are effective against it
- 3) The average number of people that one infected person can pass the virus to (R Number) for COVID-19 can be reduced through mitigation strategies that reduce the quantity, frequency, and duration of close contacts
- 4) To effectively contain disease to manageable levels, it is essential to sustain an adequate capacity for public health response (case follow-up, contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine), testing, and healthcare response

Updates to the order will continue to be made as understanding of the virus and local data described above indicate they are needed. This may include tightening, staying steady, loosening, or eliminating sections of the order. The order aims to prevent and control COVID-19 by:

- 1) Providing guidance for individual behaviors that would reduce risk for disease transmission (e.g. physical distancing, reduction of leisure travel, minimizing number of contacts, self-isolation when sick)
- 2) Establishing standards for public buildings and spaces to reduce the risk for disease outbreaks (e.g. reducing occupancy and facilitating physical distancing, establishing additional standards for services in which physical distancing may not be feasible, reducing self-service food and beverage operations, increasing standards for cleaning and disinfection, promoting screening and exclusion of ill or close-contact employees and guests, establishing procedures to enable a disease investigation)
- 3) Reducing the risk for outbreaks from public gatherings (e.g. limiting the number of attendees and documenting specific contact information for attendees to facilitate case and contact tracing)

Plan for Changing COVID-19 Prevention Requirements

Below is the plan for moving our community toward resuming normal operations and activities with no specific restrictions related to preventing the spread of COVID-19. The **movement between steps** is based on the metrics discussed above. If all of the metrics are green, the community will step forward toward increased gathering sizes and fewer health and safety requirements for public spaces and buildings. If all

of the metrics are red in a given category or in all categories, the Health Department may increase safety by moving to a previous step. A combination of red, yellow, or green metrics will be reviewed alongside possible additional data to make a determination of what is best for community health and prevention of disease spread based on public health principles and evidence-supported judgement. This may include tightening, holding steady, loosening, or eliminating requirements.

Data will be compiled weekly (Tuesday to the next Monday) and analyzed. The updated metrics will be posted on Wednesday morning and a decision made related to an update to the order following review of this data. Subsequent order updates or changes will likely be announced for a Thursday 12:00AM start.

The **duration of each step** will be a minimum of two weeks to provide some time to determine how that step has impacted the disease occurrence and data on local capacity for response. Because this disease has a 14-day incubation period, 28 days between steps provides a more complete picture of how disease occurrence might change as a result of movement between steps. The two-week duration was chosen to assure that regular monitoring and evaluation of trends occurred. Some steps may last longer than others, as the data indicates a need to prevent the spread of disease in higher-risk settings. Additionally, the plan below may be modified as understanding of the virus and the COVID-19 disease evolves, and by routine evaluation of the situation at the regional and the statewide level, to provide assurance that decreased safety measures locally would not compromise the capacity for response on a larger scale.

The following table provides a summary of anticipated changes for future public health orders. Please review each public health order for details. This plan may change as understanding of the virus or local disease occurrence changes.

		Safer at Home	Respond Together Eau Claire Plan Steps <i>See current local public health order for details</i>						
Category	Restriction Type	Effective 3/25	A Effective 5/14	B Effective 5/29	C Effective 6/11	D Effective 6/25	E	F	
		More restrictive <-----> Less restrictive Movement may be to the next step or a previous step as data indicates							
All public buildings and spaces	Maximum Occupancy	Not specified	Restricted to lesser: 144 sq. ft. per household, as allowed by Building Code, maximum number to maintain physical distancing			Recommended 50% occupancy	Recommended less than Building Code	No COVID-19 specific restrictions or recommendations	
	Physical Distancing	Required	Required; specific situations in which physical distancing exceptions may be relaxed will be added as permissible (e.g. personal services)						
	Strategies to facilitate physical distancing at entrance to facility	Not specified	Required				Recommended		
	Increased Cleaning and Disinfection	Required	Required				Recommended		
	Screening/exclusion ill or high-risk employees & customers	Not specified	Required						
	Full cooperation with public health investigations	Not specified	Required						
	No. of workers	Non-essential businesses close	Minimum number required to perform operations and promote health and safety			No restrictions			
	Door-to-Door Solicitation	Prohibited			Discouraged				
	Self-dispensing of unpackaged food	Prohibited	Prohibited, except for raw agricultural commodities at grocery stores			Discouraged	No restrictions		
	Self-service operations (food or beverage)	Prohibited	Prohibited; may allow certain self-service operations based on risk			Discouraged	No restrictions		

Category	Restriction Type	Safer at Home Effective 3/25	Respond Together Eau Claire Plan Steps See current local public health order for details					F
			A Effective 5/14	B Effective 5/29	C Effective 6/11	D	E	
Additional Requirements for 1-on-1 Personal Services	Physical distancing	Personal 1 on 1 services not permitted	Required between workstations and in all elements of business in which it is feasible					No COVID-19 specific restrictions or recommendations
	Cleaning and Sanitation		Required between appointments					
	Cloth Face Coverings – Client		Required				Recommended	
	Cloth Face Coverings - Provider		Required				Recommended	
	Face Shield - Provider		Recommended					
	Client Limit		10 per provider	Recommended 20 or less per day				
	Scheduling		Appointment Only	Appointment Recommended				
	Customer Contact Information		Required					
	Waiting Areas		In Vehicles or Outdoors Only			Must meet Public Building and Space Requirements		
	Screening of Employees and Clients		Required					
Category	Restriction Type		A	B	C	D	E	E
Public Gatherings	Indoor Spaces (Max. No. Attendees) <i>Excluding Paid Employees</i>	Weddings, funerals, religious services 9 person limit	10	10	50	100	250	No COVID-19 specific restrictions or recommendations
	Outdoor Spaces (Max. No. Attendees) <i>Excluding Paid Employees</i>		10	20	100	250	250	
	Attendees Contact Information	Not specified	Required					
	Physical Distancing	Required	Required of all Attendees, assigned fixed seating recommended; specific situations for physical distancing exceptions will be added as permissible (e.g. team sports)					
	Public Buildings and Spaces	Social distancing requirements	All Section 2 Requirements of the local public health order must be met					

CONCLUSION

Responding effectively to COVID-19 takes the whole community. Efficiently and effectively moving to a new normal with limited impact on daily activities is critically important to us as individuals, businesses, and community stakeholders. Carefully utilizing public health principles and core metrics helps to support our community in reaching our goals of reducing the number of people who simultaneously contract COVID-19 and reducing deaths from COVID-19. We look forward to this partnership as we work toward a healthy and successful Eau Claire County.