

# **Urgent News Release #5**

## **Richland County Emergency Management**

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## **RICHLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY PARTNERS RESPOND TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

*Richland Center, WI:* A virtual Emergency Operations Center meeting was held this morning to share information between Richland County officials and community partners in a joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer Rose Kohout announced that as of 2:00pm Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) confirmed that in the state of Wisconsin there were 155 confirmed cases for COVID-19, 2,192 have tested negative, and there were 2 deaths related to COVID-19. The first death was a male in his 50s from Fond du Lac County and the second death was a male in his 90s from Ozaukee County. There is no confirmed case of COVID-19 within Richland County at this time. Ms. Kohout reported that Richland County Public Health frequently monitors all incoming data and will continue to monitor the data over the weekend.

The Richland Hospital continues offering drive-thru testing daily from 8-11am and request that patients call their Coronavirus Hotline at (608) 604-9953 BEFORE coming to the hospital. The Richland Hospital Coronavirus Hotline is available 24 hours/day. At

this time, all tests submitted by the Richland Hospital have been negative. The Wisconsin State Lab is prioritizing tests, so test results are taking 4-5 days to process. The Richland Hospital is working on segregating patients within the hospital, and will possibly utilize their rural health clinics for routine, healthy patient appointments.

Richland County Health & Human Services Director Tracy Thorsen reports that the Health & Human Services Building, also known as the Community Services Building, will be closed to the public after 5:00pm today until further notice. Although office and lobby services are suspended, other services will continue to be provided via telephone, video-chat, telehealth, and in-person meetings in the community when appropriate. Clients and members of the public may continue to call 608-647-8821 for assistance and inquires. Individuals are encouraged to use the drop box just outside the main front door to drop off documents for staff to process.

Richland County Administrator Clinton Langreck announced that the Richland County Courthouse will have restricted public entry after 4:30pm today until further notice. Entry to the building may be granted to citizens with scheduled appointments for services that cannot be conducted via phone, mail, or electronically AND for citizens that need to gain access to the County Clerk's Office for business related to voting and the elections. Richland County officials are encouraging people to conduct business with county departments via phone, mail, and email when possible. Appointments can be made if you call ahead and do not have any symptoms or do not believe that you have been exposed to COVID-19. Please be advised that all Sheriff's Office services are in full function. A

list of department phone numbers can be found on the Richland County website [www.co.richland.wi.us](http://www.co.richland.wi.us). Additional instructions on accessing county services and informational updates can be found on the NEW Richland County COVID-19 website <https://covid.co.richland.wi.us>.

The Richland School District will be closing all buildings to the public at 4:00pm today until further notice and the Ithaca School District will be closing all buildings to the public at 3:00pm today until further notice. The University of Wisconsin-Platteville/Richland and Southwest Wisconsin Technical College have closed all of their buildings to the public until further notice.

All other community partners continue to work in groups of 10 or less people and practice social distancing of six feet between people. Many local restaurants and taverns are closed, but some are offering Take-Out or curbside delivery food ordering options.

For more information, follow Richland County Health & Human Services on Facebook or consult the following websites:

- ❖ Richland County:  
<https://covid.co.richland.wi.us>
- ❖ Wisconsin Department of Health Services:  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19)
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/)

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