

Urgent News Release #6

Richland County Emergency Management

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RICHLAND COUNTY COMMUNITY PARTNERS RESPOND TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Richland Center, WI: We have begun our second week of virtual Emergency Operations Center meetings intended 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 Sunday, March 22nd the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) confirmed that in the state of Wisconsin there were 381 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 6,230 have tested negative, and there were 4 deaths related to COVID-19. There is no confirmed case of COVID-19 within Richland County at this time; however, ongoing testing continues. Ms. Kohout recommended that people stay home if possible and practice excellent personal hygiene habits; washing hands with soapy water frequently. Please continue to follow the statewide moratorium on mass gatherings of 10 or more people to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and preserve social distancing of six feet between people.

Richland County Health & Human Services Director Tracy Thorsen reports that the Health & Human Services Building is now closed to the public until further notice. Although office and lobby services are suspended, staff are still reporting to work to provide essential services 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.

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. The Wisconsin State Lab is prioritizing tests, so test results are taking 4-5 days to process. The Richland Hospital and local skilled nursing facilities continue to monitor patients and staff for symptoms while keeping the patient population segregated.

Richland County Administrator Clinton Langreck announced that the Richland County Courthouse now has restricted public entry until further notice. Entry into 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. 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 University of Wisconsin-Platteville/Richland, the Richland School District, and the Ithaca School District have all closed their buildings and playgrounds to the public until further notice. The Southwest Wisconsin Technical College have closed all of their buildings to the public and began holding online courses today.

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. Small business owners are being cautioned to watch for predatory lending scams. The Greater Richland Area Chamber of Commerce office will be offering more information on their website www.gorcchamber.com.

For the most up-to-date COVID-19 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
- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/

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