

Urgent News Release #57

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 again this morning to share information between Richland County officials and community partners in a joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting Monday, May 18th the virtual EOC meetings will only be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9am. The Whole Community Recovery Steering Committee will hold meetings and conduct business related to the local recovery effort on Fridays. It was noted that this new schedule would be monitored and modified as needed.

Richland County Administrator, Clinton Langreck offered a response to the Wisconsin Supreme Court striking down Wisconsin's Stay at Home Order for all community partners to consider. This means the state order prohibiting the closure of non-essential business, the prohibiting of mass gatherings, the restrictions on travel and enforcement of social distancing are no more in effect. School district partners clarified that schools are excluded from the court ruling and remain closed. Public Health Manager/Local Health Officer, Rose Kohout encouraged Richland County citizens to have a "heightened sense of awareness to keep yourself and those you love safe." It was determined that Richland

County does not see an immediate need for mandated restrictions by ordinance or health order; however, Public Health recommends that citizens wear a cloth mask when in a public setting, practice social distancing, and continue excellent hygiene habits.

It was reported that as of 2:00pm Wednesday, May 13th there remain 13 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Richland County, 381 have tested negative, 8 individuals have been released from quarantine, and there have been 2 deaths as a result of COVID-19 at this time. Kohout noted that the number of positive cases in Richland County has remained static for some time; “up to this point we have been able to mitigate the spread, which is attributable to the efforts of the people and businesses in our community. We need to continue preventative measures to keep one another safe and healthy.”

The Richland Hospital continues to phase in the reopening of their building and services. Non-emergent surgical procedures are being performed now; working through a risk stratification plan from low to high risk patients. A “soft launch” of Primary Care visits at the Richland Hospital campus will expand over the next 4-6 weeks. Primary Care visits will also continue at the Muscoda Health Center and the Spring Green Medical Center during this time. The Richland Hospital Coronavirus Hotline remains available 24 hours a day 7 days a week and patients are still being instructed to call (608) 604-9953 BEFORE coming to the hospital. The Richland Hospital continues to offer their “Respiratory Illness Evaluation” drive-thru service from **8am-Noon** 7 days a week and COVID-19 testing is being offered to anyone displaying symptoms.

Richland County Community Partners reiterated that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources suspension of all burning permits is still in place. Richland County citizens need to be aware that the burning of debris in barrels, as well as the burning of debris on piles on the ground, grass or wooded areas remain prohibited at this time. Small campfires used for warmth or cooking do not require a permit, but are discouraged.

Richland County Community Partners shared the status of their individual organization's emergency response, reviewed staffing and PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) needs and local inventory, and discussed priority topics to support the community through the recovery process. The Whole Community Recovery Steering Committee has been meeting regularly to identify the economic impact of COVID-19 on Richland County families and determine a suitable long-term recovery structure for our citizens.

If you have a COVID-19 question that you want our community partners to answer, please call Richland County Health & Human Services at 608-647-8821 and submit your question to the receptionist or email the question to rchhs@co.richland.wi.us. Citizens are encouraged to check out the Richland County COVID-19 Dashboard which offers helpful data to better understand the impact of the pandemic globally and locally: <https://covid.co.richland.wi.us/2020/04/21/richland-county-covid-19-dashboard/>. 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>
- ❖ The Greater Richland Area Chamber of Commerce
www.gorcchamber.com

- ❖ 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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