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NEWS RELEASE

To: Local Media
From: Marie-Noel Sandoval, MPH, Health Officer
Date: March 18th, 2020

COVID-19 Daily Update

As of today, there are 106 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in the State of Wisconsin, with one case already recovered. There are zero confirmed positive cases in Rock County. There have been 44 negative tests reported thus far. Please keep in mind that newly identified cases and the number of residents being tested are continually changing. Additionally, the number negative test results is not a representative measure of disease presence in our community. Negative test results do not necessary mean no disease; just as is true with other infections.

Please visit <https://www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth-familycommunity/publichealth-communicabledisease/coronavirus-disease-2019> to view the Daily Rock County COVID-19 Update.

Community Spread

Three counties, Milwaukee, Dane and Kenosha, have made announcements that there is community spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin based on their disease investigations. This means that there are people who have tested positive who have no exposures to a known case nor did they travel to a location where there is known community spread.

The Rock County Public Health Department urges that all residents continue to practice prevention strategies, such as hand washing and social distancing, to comply with all mandates regarding gatherings, and to use remote services where ever possible to avoid unnecessary contact with others.

Testing Results

The Rock County Public Health Department nurses assure that there are residents being tested for COVID-19 every day. If you have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting your results, you will be contacted by the provider who had ordered your test as soon as those results are available.

Testing Capacity

Yesterday, Governor Evers presented information at a press conference to give more insight on the current testing capacity for COVID-19 in Wisconsin. DHS and Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene are moving to tiered COVID-19 testing to manage capacity. This will help them prioritize which tests to run first, because the number they are receiving is more than they can process each day. At this time, statewide laboratory capacity for processing COVID-19 tests is limited to 400/day. There is a potential shortage of test reagents nationwide, which could also place limits on testing capacity

In order to conserve supplies for testing to make sure those who are sick can get tested, WSLH and DHS are now prioritizing two tiers of cases for testing:

Tier One (Individuals who):

- are critically ill and receiving ICU level care with unexplained viral pneumonia or respiratory failure
- are hospitalized (non-ICU) with fever or signs and symptoms of lower respiratory tract illness (cough, shortness of breath) and either known exposure to a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient or travel to an area with sustained community transmission

Tier Two (Individuals who):

- are hospitalized (non-ICU) with unexplained fever and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory tract illness
- are health care workers with unexplained fever and signs/symptoms of a lower-respiratory illness, regardless of hospitalization

Test requests for individual that do not fall into one of those tiers will be sent to other labs in the state and country for testing, resulting in longer wait times. Patients with mild symptoms and no underlying health conditions should self-quarantine at home, rest and treat symptoms in order to ensure that there are enough resources to test sick people.

Child Care Settings

Today, Governor Evers directed DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm to restrict the size of all child care settings going into effect at 8:00am on Thursday, March 19th, 2020. Centers may not operate with more than 10 staff present at a time and may not operate with more than 50 children present at a time.

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