



Memorandum

Date: October 20, 2020
To: All DSPS Credential Holders
From: Dawn B. Crim, Secretary-designee
RE: Fall Update

The state continues to record a high number of positive COVID-19 tests every day, and our seven-day average is above 3,000. An alternate care facility at the Wisconsin State Fairgrounds in West Allis has been open since last Wednesday. Earlier this year, our agency helped stand up the site. Now, some COVID-19 patients will move to the field hospital to continue treatment when the hospitals where they began their care need to make room for more acute patients. Governor Evers has said that we developed the alternate care facility so that it would be there if we needed it, but he had hoped we never would. Yet here we are.

[Every county in Wisconsin is experiencing high levels of COVID-19](#), and [several of our communities](#) are among the [worst in the country](#) for disease activity. We are setting records for numbers of cases and hospitalizations, and the health care system is bracing for things to get worse before they get better.

Governor Evers and the entire administration are taking steps to respond to this crisis. He recently issued [Emergency Order 2](#) to give the Wisconsin health care system the flexibility it needs to quickly augment staff and to treat patients outside of traditional clinical settings. Licensed [providers from other states can obtain temporary licenses](#) to practice in Wisconsin during the public health emergency, and [Wisconsin licensees who left practice can renew their licenses with no continuing education requirements or late fees](#). Forms are available on our [website](#).

We are also supporting the Department of Health Services and their efforts to recruit health care volunteers. The state is using the [Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry \(WEAVR\)](#). WEAVR is a web-based online registration system for health professional volunteers willing to serve in an emergency. The state uses WEAVR to facilitate health and medical response through identification, credentialing, and deployment of volunteers. We have asked health care professionals to consider registering to volunteer.

At our agency, we have been taking the steps to adapt to our new environment and to offer flexibility to credential holders seeking renewal or individuals seeking initial licensing. We are working with boards to address testing requirements while examinations are postponed, and we are extending continuing education deadlines when we have the authority to do so. We want to do what we can to ensure that our licensees can remain in the workforce.

We have implemented virtual building inspections to minimize the interaction between our staff and our customers. We are encouraging electronic plan submission, again to limit in-person contact between customers and staff, and we have created several tools to assist individuals as they transition from paper to digital submittal. We have also developed [safety resources](#) for public employees using PPE for the first time and for facilities departments that are adjusting their cleaning and disinfecting protocols and adding new supplies.

We are also supporting the administration on recovery efforts. The economic impact has been profound, and many of our customers are struggling. Governor Evers continues to look for ways to help Wisconsin businesses to stay afloat, and he recently announced round two of the [We're All In](#) grant program. This round of grants will award \$50 million to Wisconsin small businesses that have been hurt by the pandemic. I encourage you to review eligibility and consider applying.

We will continue to work closely with the governor to identify other programs and efforts that will help businesses and individuals survive these difficult times. You can expect to hear about more opportunities in the coming months.

Otherwise, there are things we can all do to help turn the tide on the pandemic. We can do the simple things like washing our hands and wearing masks. Governor Evers issued a [statewide mask mandate](#), and it requires us to wear masks indoors (in most instances) when we are not at home. Science shows that we can reduce COVID-19 transmission when we all wear a face covering.

We also must do some harder things. As much as we all want to be together again, we still should avoid indoor gatherings and minimize our contact with people who do not live in the same residence. We should also maintain at least six feet of physical distance when possible, especially—but not only—inside. There have been incidents of outdoor transmission between individuals who did not maintain physical distance.

The loss of our usual gatherings continues to be among the bigger sacrifices for many of us. We want to go to restaurants, take vacations, and invite friends and family to join us in celebrating birthdays and weddings and holidays. We want to return to movie theaters, concert halls, and sports stadiums. Sadly, we cannot do any of those things safely until we get the coronavirus under control, and it is not under control.

I want our DSPS customers to weather this storm, and I will keep working with you and for you. And I ask you to do whatever you can to keep yourself, your family, your customers, your employees, and your community safe. The fastest way out of this pandemic is for us to follow a plan based on science and for us all to work together.