

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2020

**Public Health Emergency COVID-19 Advisory:
Southern Region Health Departments Advise Continued Use of Masks**

Issued by the
following Local
Health

Departments:

Adams

Columbia

Crawford

Dodge

Grant

Green

Iowa

Jefferson

Juneau

Lafayette

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Rock

Sauk

Vernon

Watertown

The Public Health Officers in the Southern Region of Wisconsin are issuing a **Public Health COVID-19 Advisory** asking citizens to continue the critical prevention measure of wearing a mask. Public Health Officers stress that individuals should wear masks or face coverings that cover their mouth and nose when around non-household members, following current State of Wisconsin DHS and CDC guidance.

In general, this means masking when around others who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or are of unknown vaccination status with few exceptions (<https://www.cdc.gov/.../vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>). It is important to note that businesses and schools can still require masks without a State order. For additional information visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

“The overturning of the State masking order on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 by the State Supreme Court does not mean masking and social distancing are no longer important”, stated Debbie Siegenthaler, Chair of the Southern Region’s WI Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB). “We all want to be done with this pandemic, but we need to hang on a little longer. One important measure we can take is wearing a mask and we ask that residents continue until we can get a larger percentage of folks vaccinated,” explained Siegenthaler.

Health Departments in southern Wisconsin issue this alert related to continued concerns with variant strains and surrounding states experiencing increasing case counts. It is also issued with hopes that continuing this important prevention measure can position us to have a much more enjoyable summer than was the case in 2020.

Southern Wisconsin is making great progress in vaccination efforts. As of April 2, 2021, all counties in the southern region are approaching or have surpassed 30% of residents have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. View the interactive DHS data dashboard at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-data.htm>

It continues to be important that fully vaccinated people follow public health best practices in public spaces. This includes wearing a mask and physically distancing. Fully vaccinated people should also continue these practices when visiting unvaccinated people who are at an increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease. You can find more information at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-after.htm>

“The bottom line is that we must remain careful and diligent in the prevention measures we know work, such as mask wearing, physical distancing, avoiding large gatherings and washing our hands,” added Siegenthaler. “We need the assistance of each citizen in continuing to be part of an effective pandemic response and thank you in advance for your continued cooperation”.

For more information on cases in your area, COVID-19 recommendations and information on how to schedule your COVID-19 vaccination, visit your local health department’s website or social media page.

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