

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Kim Sippola
Public Relations Manager, Outagamie County
kim.sippola@outagamie.org
920.213.5336

MASK REQUIREMENT TO BE ISSUED IN OUTAGAMIE COUNTY

(APPLETON, WI) – In response to today’s ruling by the Wisconsin Supreme Court overturning Gov. Tony Evers’ statewide mask requirement, Outagamie County Public Health Officer/Manager, Natalie Vandeveld, will be issuing a Local Public Health Order on Thursday, April 1 requiring face coverings in portions of Outagamie County that fall within the Jurisdiction of Outagamie County Public Health. Both County Executive Thomas Nelson and County Board Chair Jeff Nooyen have worked collaboratively with Public Health to enact and support this decision.

The order will take effect immediately upon issuance in all areas of Outagamie County except the City of Appleton and the Oneida Nation, which have their own public health agencies. Under the order, everyone 5 years of age and older will be required to wear a face covering when indoors or in enclosed spaces and around people who are not household members, with some limited exceptions. Although vaccination efforts are proceeding as quickly as vaccine is obtained, and we anticipate vaccine supply to continually increase, only 28.1% of Outagamie County residents have received at least one dose and 16.6% have been fully vaccinated at the time of this release. It is important for the public to know that the majority of our population is still vulnerable to the virus that causes COVID-19.

“Continuing to practice proven mitigation strategies such as social distancing, hand washing and masking will reduce the spread of COVID-19,” said Vandeveld. “Meanwhile, Outagamie County Public Health is working closely with our partner agencies to continue our intensive efforts to vaccinate our community as quickly as possible. Choosing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine remains the best action one can take towards stopping further spread here in our communities.”

Voluntary compliance, education on the importance of wearing masks and widespread vaccination will continue to be the emphasis of the county’s efforts according to Outagamie County Board Chair Jeff Nooyen. “The sooner we beat this disease the sooner our lives can return to normal. That includes thriving businesses, in-person schooling, and a chance to see our friends and family again. The only way to do that is by everyone masking up and getting vaccinated. These are very easy and effective steps to return to normalcy.”

The Outagamie County Board passed a Resolution in February urging the State Legislature to work with the Governor to implement proven mitigation strategies statewide to help control the spread of COVID-19.

“While a statewide approach is much more effective in combating a global pandemic, today’s Supreme Court decision leaves us no other choice but to act at the local level to protect the health and safety of

our community,” said Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson. “We've got to do all we can to limit the spread of the virus and save lives.”

Additional information on COVID-19, including Outagamie County data regarding disease activity and vaccination information, can be found at the Outagamie County website. Questions or comments regarding this order or its enforcement can be directed to the county’s public relations manager, Kim Sippola, at mask.inquiry@outagamie.org or by calling 1-888-820-7993.

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