



## Shawano-Menominee Counties Health Department

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### SHAWANO-MENOMINEE COUNTIES EXPERIENCING THE REALITIES OF COVID-19

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Shawano-Menominee Counties – Like many counties in Wisconsin, the people of Shawano and Menominee counties have experienced increased hospital admissions due to the pandemic of the COVID-19 virus in our own back yard! This has led to our own crisis of not only an overflow of our people needing hospital beds for critical care, but we now are experiencing multiple reported deaths almost daily over the last 4 weeks. We have to remember that these deaths in our community are impacted by COVID-19 and include our family and friends.

While our local hospitals and clinics have many talented and passionate healthcare workers, they are saturated with the ongoing challenges for patient needs; from home care to critical care in the hospital setting. For one, there are not enough hospital beds in the northeast region for the number of people who are ill.

- As beds are not available in our local hospital, loved ones may need to be transferred to hospitals far away from home.
- Hospitals spend valuable time finding ways to expand bed capacity that may impact other services such as elective or essential surgery.
- Services in Shawano-Menominee counties are constantly faced with a daily choice to take the chance of being open or staying virtual and not knowing when it would be appropriate to return to normal activities. This has caused the increased risk of exposing more community members as this includes:
  - School administrators, faculty and staff,
  - Local businesses,
  - Food and beverage services,
  - Faith based supports and any other community building events.

Please take heed: We have to remember there are many other conditions that require hospital care other than COVID-19. Whether one “believes” in COVID-19 or not, we do not want to be the cause of someone’s exposure to a devastating illness because we may not know someone else’s health condition. Our clinic and hospital systems were built to offer services of all kinds of illnesses. We are NOT going to move out of this crisis until each one of us takes on the hard choice to NOT act in risky behavior that exposes us to devastating results. It is critical for every one of us to manage our individual behavior for betterment of our parents, siblings, grandparents, children, neighbors, and healthcare workers.

This is no longer a question of “IF” we have to live with this, but “HOW” we choose to live with this. While we cannot change others behaviors, we can change our own. We must pull together as a community to overcome the current physical realities of COVID-19. This brings each of us to the hard decisions not to congregate in large groups, physically distance as much as possible, and wear facemasks when appropriate. This is for the health of our families and fellow community members. We believe this community is full of compassionate and concerned citizens and we humbly ask for each of us to take responsibility and do the right thing for a bit longer.

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