

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE Inter-Office Communication

Date: June 21, 2022

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: The Office of the County Executive

Subject: Report from the Office of the County Executive, providing information on current COVID-19 mitigation procedures, and the actions Milwaukee County is continuing to take to ensure it keeps its workforce and the people they serve safe.

File Type: Informational

BACKGROUND

Throughout the pandemic, the goal of Milwaukee County's COVID-19 pandemic management process has been to continue County government operations and critical services for its residents, while keeping its staff and participants, as well as the wider community, safe. Milwaukee County government has many public-facing operations, often interacts with particularly vulnerable individuals, and is responsible for several of the largest congregate facilities in the county.

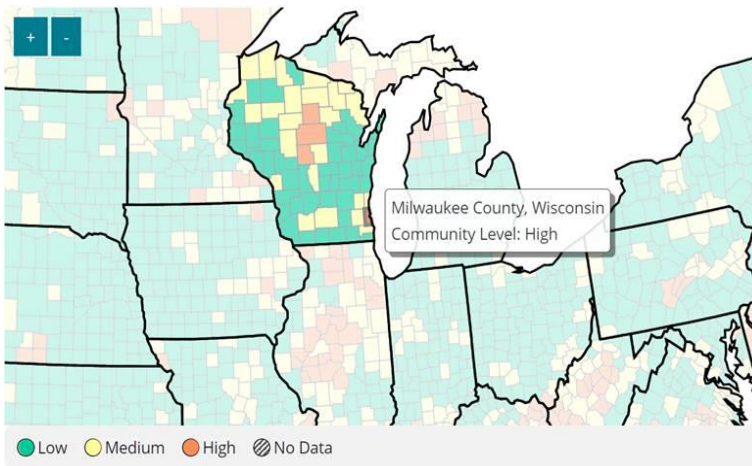
A comprehensive mitigation strategy is crucial to ensuring that Milwaukee County government can continue providing the critical services upon which many of our residents depend, while keeping employees and those service users as safe as possible from COVID-19.

The foundation of Milwaukee County's COVID-19 mitigation process is the CDC COVID-19 Community Level framework. This framework, released in late February 2022, classifies community risk into three levels - Low, Medium, and High. The CDC uses the combination of the three metrics referenced below to determine the COVID-19 community level.

- COVID-19 Cases per 100/k Residents
- COVID-19 Hospital Admissions per 100/k Residents
- COVID-19 Inpatient Bed Utilization

New COVID-19 admissions and the percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied represent the current potential for strain on the health system. Data on new cases acts as an early warning indicator of potential increases in health system strain in the event of a COVID-19 surge.

CURRENT STATE



As of Thursday, June 16, 2022, the CDC continues to classify Milwaukee County's COVID-19 community risk level as **“high”**. The County moved to “high” on May 19, 2022, when its hospital admittance rate per 100,000 residents exceeded 10.

The table below indicates the County's most current data published by the CDC on June 16, 2022. The number of cases decreased by almost 28% over the week, but with the prevalence of home testing, the number of positive cases are likely

higher. The number of admissions has consistently remained above 10 per 100,000 residents for five weeks. It did increase slightly, by 0.6 over the previous week. Inpatient bed utilization indicated a slight decline over the previous week. It had been increasing incrementally since April 21.

Case Rate per 100,000 population	206.83	There are currently two ways Milwaukee County's risk classification could return to medium. 1. The case rate falls below 200 per 100,000 residents 2. New hospital admissions fall below 10 per 100,000 residents.
New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population	11	
% Staffed inpatient beds in use by patients with confirmed COVID-19	3.8%	

While the CDC Community Risk levels only use the three measures listed above to determine the level of risk, other measures can also be useful in assessing the level of COVID-19 risk in Milwaukee County. For example, the percentage of positive tests may provide a more accurate assessment than just reviewing the case rate. The percentage of positive tests continues to remain above 10% and has consistently been around 13-15% for several weeks. Apart from the Omicron surge in December and January, these levels are some of the highest positive test rates during the pandemic.

Another key metric is the level of COVID-19 indicated in wastewater. Monitoring COVID in wastewater can be an early indicator of increases or decrease of the levels of COVID in the community. As of June 16, the level of COVID indicated in the Jones Island sewershed is 15.2 per 100,000 residents. This is lower than the previous weekly averages and may indicate the beginning of a favorable trend.

CURRENT MITIGATION STEPS

Masking

Moving to the “high” risk level required an update to the County's masking guidelines. Because of the increased risk to County employees and the potentially vulnerable people they serve, and under the advisement of Dr. Weston, masking returned to many public and non-public areas of Milwaukee

County facilities. A link to the masking guidelines table is pasted below:

[FaceMaskPolicySummaryTable_HighRiskLevel.pdf \(milwaukee.gov\)](#)

Capacity

Capacity guidelines also remain at “high” status. The capacity guidelines format was significantly revised in May and is now more closely aligned with the CDC Community Risk Levels. Listed below are the current “high” classification guidelines:

- Telework required where possible
- Provide the ability for six feet of distancing per person
- Ensure the availability of high-quality masks**
- In-person employees complete COVID-19 screening survey on County Connect
- Avoid non-essential indoor activities
- Maintain improved ventilation throughout public and private indoor spaces when possible
 - Open windows and doors when possible
- Consider in-person participant vulnerability

OTHER UPDATES

The COVID-19 workgroup is partnering with communications and marketing to implement a recognition program. Employees at all levels will be encouraged to nominate an individual, or group of individuals who have done an outstanding job protecting our employees, and the people we serve. Nominees will be showcased in the weekly “What’s Up” newsletter and on County Connect.

IMSD has updated the Dayforce system to accommodate proof of booster vaccination. Submission of proof of booster vaccination is still required for new employees joining one of the high-risk facilities. Through the high-risk facility employee booster mandate and the booster incentive from earlier this year the County has proof of booster vaccination for more than 1,300 employees, approximately 1/3 of the County’s workforce. Being up to date on vaccinations significantly reduces the risk from severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

NEXT STEPS

The COVID-19 Workgroup will continue to monitor the COVID-19 data, and under the advisement of Dr. Weston, take the appropriate steps continue to keep Milwaukee County employees, and the people they serve, safe.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Mitigating the spread of COVID-19, and thus preventing further death and long-term negative health effects, is one of the most meaningful steps that Milwaukee County government can take in service of our Vision to become the healthiest county in Wisconsin. While we must still address the disparities and negative health outcomes that are the result of decades of policy choices, COVID-19 is a clear and present danger to the health and well-being of our constituents and employees. This framework not only works to address the health aspects of our strategic plan, but also ensures that Milwaukee County is able to continue the work that our departments are undertaking to advance our strategic plan and work towards our Vision by providing critical services to our residents.

FISCAL EFFECT

Fiscal Note Not Required

TERMS

N/A

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