

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: May 18, 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.

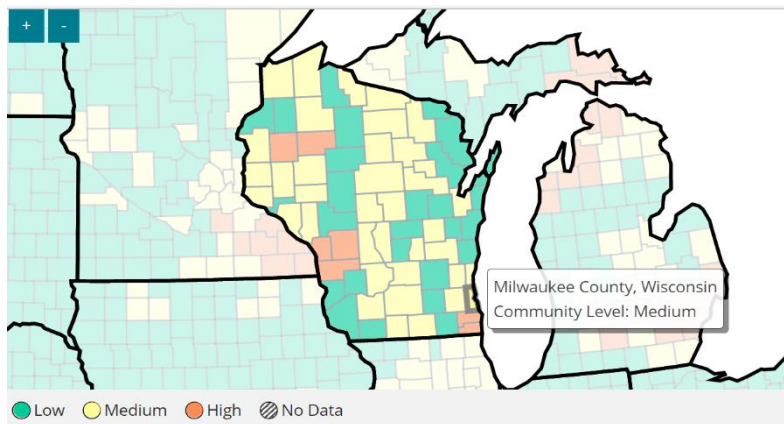
A comprehensive mitigation strategy is crucial to ensuring that Milwaukee County government can continue providing the critical services upon which many of our residents depend, while keeping employees and those service users as safe as possible from COVID-19.

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, May 12, 2022, the CDC continues to classify Milwaukee County COVID-19 community level as “medium”. The County moved to “medium” on May 5, 2022, when its case rate per 100,000 residents exceeded 200.

The table below indicates the County’s most current data published by the CDC on May 12, 2022. The number of cases has

increased 27% over the week, and the number of admissions has increased 23%. Inpatient bed utilization remains steady.

Case Rate per 100,000 population	281.27
New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population	8.8
% Staffed inpatient beds in use by patients with confirmed COVID-19	2.6%

If the number of new COVID-19 admissions exceeds 10 per 100,000 residents, Milwaukee County’s COVID-19 community level will be classified as “high” prompting the consideration and implementation of additional mitigation measures.

CURRENT MITIGATION STEPS

Masking

Moving to the “medium” 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 the public areas of these two County locations:

- Milwaukee County Courthouse Complex
- Vel Phillips Youth and Family Justice Center

All visitors to these locations are now required to mask. County employees interacting with members of the public, or when in public areas of either facility also need to mask. This update was communicated and implemented on May 6. Masking is not currently required for employees in non-public areas of either facility. Masking requirements have not changed for other Milwaukee County locations.

Vaccination Verification Process

As part of the Vaccine Mandate procedure, new hires are required to be fully vaccinated, or have received an approved exemption prior to beginning employee with the County. To

facilitate the hiring and onboarding process, the vaccination verification process has been modified. All new hires are now required to submit only one form of proof of vaccination. The previous requirement was two forms.

IN PROCESS ACTIONS

In response to the current increases in COVID-19 cases in our community and the significant potential for additional COVID-19 variants in the future, the COVID-19 Workgroup will be implementing a promotional campaign to encourage employees to obtain their booster vaccination. The current boosters available to the public are still the most effective method for preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. The CDC recommends that all who are eligible should be up to date with their vaccinations which means that you received all doses in the primary series and one booster when eligible.

This campaign will use multiple channels to communicate with employees including videos, newsletters, and posters, among others.

The COVID-19 workgroup is also implementing 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 County Connect.

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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