



Health Department

Empowered to Live Well

February 19, 2021

Dear Residents and Business Owners,

The South Milwaukee/St. Francis Health Department's response to COVID-19 is reaching the one-year milestone. We certainly recognize the toll this response has taken on everyone as we grow weary of the messages to continue protective measures by wearing masks, staying physically distant from others, and not engaging in large gatherings.

Over the last month COVID-19 cases in Milwaukee County, South Milwaukee, and St. Francis have been steadily declining. Milwaukee County data are also showing positive trends. In reviewing [Gating Criteria for Milwaukee County](#), three of the five indicators are yellow, including *Testing, PPE, and Tracing*. The *Cases and Care* indicators are currently Green, indicating that the percent positive of those tested for COVID-19 is less than 5% and less than 10% of hospitalized patients are COVID-19 positive.

The South Milwaukee/St. Francis Health Department has been working in coordination with the Cudahy and Oak Creek Health Departments to provide vaccinations. Hundreds of residents are being vaccinated each week. While the distribution of vaccine is slower than we had hoped, we will continue to work together to maximize our resources.

While the data show promising trends, new genetic variants of the COVID-19 virus and being largely indoors through the remaining weeks of winter could quickly reverse these trends. The Health Department continues to recommend individuals and the community follow the guidance of wearing face masks, staying at least 6 feet apart, avoiding crowds, washing hands, and getting tested for COVID-19 if you are feeling sick.

The Health Department is moving from our Phased Reopening Model to a longer-term plan of Safe Practices Guidelines. These guidelines align with other suburban municipalities in Milwaukee County, along with the elements outlined in the [City of Milwaukee's Business COVID Safety Plan](#) for restaurant and bars. The purpose of the realignment was to provide businesses with tools and information on how to reduce risk rather than general occupancy guidelines. Further details on the Safe Practice Guidelines are available [here](#). Key aspects of the **Safe Practice Guidelines** include:

- Public gatherings limited to 50 people;
- Occupancy limits for restaurants and bars at a capacity where the number of individuals allows for maintenance of physical distancing and protective measures; and
- Occupancy limits for retail establishments, salons and spa services, gyms and places of amusement where the number of individuals allows for maintenance of physical distancing and protective measures.

Your health and safety is our priority. We thank you for your continued patience and cooperation in this unprecedented public health crisis. For additional information you can view the websites for the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control](#) or call the Health Department at 414-768-8055.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Ove

Public Health Administrator/ Health Officer