

Barrett on 'UpFront' urges people to stay home to stop spread of coronavirus

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Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, in self-quarantine after a COVID-19 exposure, said his message to others is "stay at home."

"My strongest message to people is, please, you're safer at home. So please, stay home," the mayor said in a Skype interview from his home on "UpFront." The program is produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

"It's not just about you. It's about everybody else, because you may be a carrier," Barrett said.

Barrett went into self-quarantine after learning that a member of his staff tested positive for COVID-19. He said that person is doing well.

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Barrett said he is running the city from home through technology and making phone calls to people.

"We're trying to do everything we can to make sure that these core city functions are still operating," he said.

"We've had meetings with our EOC, I've had other meetings, and they've all taken place either over Skype or Zoom or conference calls. So again, I haven't slowed down; it's just a different type of communication. I think around the nation this is what people who are working from home are experiencing right now," Barrett said.

Also on the program, two members of the Wisconsin Elections Commission

discussed the April 7 election.

Commission Chairman Dean Knudson of Hudson, a Republican, said it is “vitally important” that the election go forward “because we need to have continuity in local government.”

He said thousands of local government offices will be on the April 7 ballot, and the terms of those offices expire later in April.

“We can’t have vacancies in mayor and city council spots during a time of crisis,” he said.

But Commissioner Ann Jacobs of Milwaukee, a Democrat, said changes are needed so people can vote “without having to expose themselves to the coronavirus.”

“We shouldn’t be asking people to have to choose between the right to vote and the right to be safe,” she said. “Those are things that can happen at the same time.”

In another segment, a Wisconsin Hospital Association official said the greatest concern for hospitals right now is a “potential surge of large numbers of patients critically ill with COVID-19.”

“We know there will be a wave of sick COVID-19 patients,” said Dr. Mark Kaufman, chief medical officer for the Wisconsin Hospital Association. “But the question really is how quickly that’s going to happen, and how serious that wave will be.”

See more from the program:
<http://www.wisn.com/upfront>