

Dave Hansen: Continuing outbreak demonstrates need for continuing safer at home

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Here's the thing about the coronavirus, one day you don't have it and then you do. One day a county or community is free of it then it isn't. And when it shows up if you aren't taking the necessary precautions you go from having a few cases to a lot...in a very short period of time.

Until we have vastly expanded testing and the ability to trace each case, you really have no way of knowing how many people around you might have it because most people who are infected don't show symptoms. That's why the coronavirus is so dangerous.

For weeks we heard from Republicans and others who oppose the Safer at Home order that the virus is really only a problem in Dane and Milwaukee counties. And for a while that may have been true. Until it wasn't. Don't believe it? Ask the people who live in and around Brown County. Only mere weeks ago Brown County was in the group of counties where it appeared there was nothing to worry about. Then cases started showing up in JBS and other meat packing plants and the number of cases is now at 968.

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A significant number of people work in Green Bay but live elsewhere in places like Oconto, De Pere, Pulaski and other communities outside of Green Bay. If there is no social distancing in place the likelihood that they will become infected in Green Bay

and take it home to their families and communities in neighboring communities becomes a very real possibility.

Green Bay and Brown County are not unique. Anywhere that people work or live in close proximity to each other is at risk of spreading the virus if social distancing isn't followed. All it takes is one employee to test positive and your community is at risk of becoming the next hot spot.

Republican leaders Robin Vos and Scott Fitzgerald say that Minocqua is not Milwaukee. Not that long ago South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem said South Dakota isn't New York City. Now South Dakota has 2,245 cases and 11 deaths. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said, "we aren't California. We are not New York." Alabama now has 6,499 cases and 222 deaths and nearly the same ratio of cases as New York has. So just because Minocqua "isn't Milwaukee" now doesn't mean it won't become a hot spot if we don't act responsibly.

In a rare act, both parties came together in Congress and passed the CARES Act. Included in that legislation are programs designed to help people stay away from each other and to help small businesses and workers make it through the pandemic. Is it perfect? Not by a longshot. More will need to be done.

But in order for us to avoid harm and have any chance of safely getting as much of our economy as possible up and running before we have a cure or vaccine, we all need to do our part and follow the Safer at Home order. And those who are trying to use the pandemic to score political points by urging that the economy be re-opened before it is safe to do so need to stop and think about the innocent lives that will be lost and the economic ruin that will happen if we don't do this right.

- Hansen, D-Green Bay, represents the 30th Senate District.