

Dept. of Health Services: Launches COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance Dashboard

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The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) today launched [an online dashboard](#) that displays findings from the wastewater surveillance program of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in Wisconsin. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19 and is found in the feces of infected people. Sewage testing has been [used for early detection of other infectious diseases\(link is external\)](#), and this surveillance system will make it possible to better understand COVID-19 transmission in Wisconsin.

“Surveillance of wastewater is part of our broader statewide efforts to better understand and monitor this virus,” said Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. “This publicly available dashboard will also empower both Wisconsinites and leaders to make more informed decisions about COVID-19 in their communities.”

The new dashboard contains sewershed locations and boundaries, the levels of SARS-CoV-2 virus in the wastewater, and the daily new COVID-19 case rates within the chosen sewershed. A sewershed is an area of land where raw sewage from homes, businesses, and industries flows through a series of sewer pipes to a single downstream point, where it enters a wastewater treatment plant. Approximately 70 sewersheds are currently enrolled in this program, which covers over 50% of the state’s residents.

Over time, wastewater data can show whether levels of SARS-CoV-2 are rising within a sewershed. This change can be observed as early as a week before we see any rise in cases from clinical testing. Wastewater information can be used together with [our community COVID-19 case dashboard](#) and other COVID-19-related data to further inform decisions as we continue responding to the pandemic. This data will

provide public health officials with an opportunity to identify changes in COVID-19 transmission, circulation within a community, and potentially, early warning detection of outbreaks.

“This wastewater surveillance data can provide a larger window for public health officials to execute targeted public health interventions,” said Dr. Jonathan Meiman, Chief Medical Officer for the DHS Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health. “Along with testing, robust contact tracing, and monitoring disease activity, this new dashboard will be an important tool in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in communities throughout the state.”

Wastewater monitoring began in June and will run through June of 2021. DHS will continue adding sewersheds to the dashboard as more complete data become available.

The Wisconsin Coronavirus Wastewater Monitoring Network is a collaboration between DHS, the Wisconsin State Lab of Hygiene, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Find the latest information about [COVID-19](#) on the DHS website and follow @DHSWI on [Facebook\(link is external\)](#) and [Twitter\(link is external\)](#), and @dhs.wi on [Instagram\(link is external\)](#).