

Evers calls for new precautions to combat COVID-19, but issues no new restrictions

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Gov. Tony Evers signed [an executive order](#) Tuesday urging people to stay home as much as possible while pressing businesses to take steps to protect employees and customers to combat COVID-19.

But the order included no new directives limiting business activity or travel as Wisconsin faces a continued rise in COVID-19 cases.

The gov, who has faced legal challenges to various measures his administration has taken to combat the disease, said in a speech he will announce a package of COVID-19 legislation in the coming days that he hoped would pass quickly to “make sure we have the resources ready for those who need it.” But he announced no details.

He also warned federal aid to combat COVID-19 runs out at year’s end and asked for help in appealing to Congress for additional aid.

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Evers also sought to strike a hopeful tone, saying the state “can beat this virus” and anyone “would be a fool to count us out, Wisconsin.”

“The surges we see — the new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths — these are not foregone conclusions,” Evers said. “These are predictable and preventable. That means the fight against this virus is winnable, but only if we fight it together.”

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, said he watched the speech with his caucus and appreciated many of the points Evers made. Afterward, he called the

governor and left him a message encouraging Evers to work with lawmakers before releasing any legislation.

“I think the people of Wisconsin want us to stop arguing about COVID and start working together,” Vos said.

Ahead of the speech, Vos said Evers has refused to meet with lawmakers unless they have a plan to deal with COVID-19, which the speaker called “idiotic.” Vos also said he hasn’t met with Evers since spring, when an aide to the governor taped a conversation without the knowledge of GOP legislative leaders.

Evers has pleaded with Wisconsinites for weeks to limit their contact with others and take steps to combat the spread of COVID-19. But cases have continued to climb as the state has become one of the nation’s hotspots. Wisconsin on Tuesday reported a record 7,073 COVID-19 cases, bringing the seven-day average for daily confirmed cases to a record 5,825. The state also reported a record 66 new deaths Tuesday, pushing the state’s death toll to 2,395. Forty-four percent of those deaths have come in the past 41 days.

Evers has been limited in the restrictions he can place on Wisconsinites. An appeals court prevented enforcement of his administration’s restrictions on public, indoor gatherings. Meanwhile, the second mask mandate he issued expires Nov. 21 and is currently being challenged before the state Supreme Court.

Tuesday night’s speech was broadcast on YouTube and Facebook, a more high-profile platform than Evers’ regular participation in briefings by the Department of Health Services. Still, the message was largely the same: stay home when you can, take precautions and limit interaction with those outside your household.

Evers asked residents to cancel “happy hours, dinner parties, sleepovers and playdates” and to hang out virtually instead. He also recommended celebrating the upcoming holidays just with those in your own household.

“We must get back to the basics of fighting this virus just like we did last spring, and it starts at home,” Evers said. “It’s not safe to go out, it’s not safe to have others over — it’s just not safe. And it might not be safe for a while yet.”

Watch the address [here](#).