

Evers issues new public health emergency, extends mask mandate

Posted on Tuesday, Sep 22, 2020

Gov. Tony Evers today declared a new public health emergency, citing a surge in COVID-19 cases among young people, and extended his mask mandate.

Both orders are effective immediately and last 60 days.

In announcing the order, the gov noted eight Wisconsin cities were among the top 20 in the U.S. for the rise in COVID-19 cases. Of those eight, six are home to a UW System campus.

“We are seeing an alarming increase in cases across our state, especially on campus. We need folks to start taking this seriously, and young people especially — please stay home as much as you are able, skip heading to the bars, and wear a mask whenever you go out,” Evers said.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

The conservative Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty filed a lawsuit in Polk County this summer seeking to overturn the last public health emergency that Evers declared. The suit, however, didn't include a request for an injunction preventing enforcement of the mask mandate that Evers issued in addition to the health emergency.

The group said it was reviewing the current order.

“Governor Evers and his team believe the presence of COVID-19 supersedes the rule of law and our state constitution,” said Rick Esenberg, WILL's president and general counsel. “They are wrong. Letting this gross abuse of power stand is not an option.”

Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, R-Juneau, said the gov's order is "not worth the paper it's printed on." Still, Fitzgerald's statement was silent on whether he wanted the Legislature to reconvene for a vote to overturn the order. After the gov issued the first mask mandate, Fitzgerald said his caucus had the votes to overturn it, but Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, was silent on whether his chamber was willing to come back for a vote. Vos' office didn't immediately respond to a request this morning for comment.

"Governor Evers' order is moot, illegal, invalid, and almost assuredly headed for litigation," Fitzgerald said.

See the release [here](#).

Subscribers can see more in today's PM Update.