

Gov. Evers: Announces new contact tracing app to launch next week

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced today the launch of WI Exposure Notification, a new mobile app to assist in notifying contacts, allowing close contacts of those with a positive test to take quicker action will go live for Wisconsinites next week. The voluntary app uses Bluetooth technology and is available for download in the Google Play store, while iPhone users can turn the app on in their phone's settings. WI Exposure Notification complements the state's and partner agencies' efforts in contact tracing.

"We're excited about this app's potential to enhance our state's response to COVID-19," said Gov. Evers. "The voluntary WI Exposure Notification app is another tool in our toolbox to stop the spread. Because it lets you know faster if you've been in close contact with someone who's tested positive, you can take steps to keep yourself safe and protect those around you. Also, the app doesn't collect or use device location, so users will remain anonymous."

The WI Exposure Notification app does not use, collect, or store any GPS data or personal details. Instead, it uses Bluetooth technology to anonymously share Bluetooth signals with other smartphones using the app nearby. All people in Wisconsin who test positive for COVID-19 will receive a code that users enter into the app. By entering the code, the person who tests positive anonymously notifies devices their phone has shared Bluetooth signals with during the period of time they may have been contagious. For the app to work properly, Bluetooth must be enabled on the device, and the WI Exposure Notification app must be downloaded and/or enabled before you receive a positive test result.

"The more people who use the app, the more effective it will be, just like the public health measures we've been talking about throughout this pandemic."

said Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. “Stay home, wash your hands, wear a mask, physically distance, and use the WI Exposure Notification app.”

The WI Exposure Notification app will launch Dec. 23, which means that Wisconsin residents with smartphones will receive a push notification within a few days of the system going live. DHS encourages all Wisconsinites to follow the directions from the notification, which will be sent from Google to Android users and from Apple to iPhone users, to ensure the app is downloaded and/or enabled.

More information on the WI Exposure Notification app works, including a Frequently Asked Questions document and an instructional video, will be available soon.