

Gov. Evers: Details expanded COVID-19 contact tracing efforts

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today detailed efforts for delivering on another primary component of the [Badger Bounce Back Plan](#): contact tracing. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has already trained an additional 401 contact tracers over the last two months, but the program is scaling up to match Wisconsin's expanded COVID-19 testing.

"Our local health departments are already doing an excellent job with this work, and we want them to know we have their back," said Gov. Evers. "As we increase testing to 85,000 a week, we're expecting a big increase in the number of contact interviews per week, and we're scaling up to meet that demand as well as deal with potential surges from local outbreaks."

Contact tracing allows public health to track the spread of COVID-19 and break the chain of disease spread. It's done by contacting those who have tested positive, learning who they've had recent contact with and then contacting those individuals to provide guidance on testing and isolation. Under the Badger Bounce Back plan, the goal is to interview positive cases within 24 hours of diagnosis, and contacts within another 24 hours. Staying home when one tests positive or is exposed to someone who is infected with COVID-19 will be critical to stopping the spread of the disease as we continue to turn the dial and further reopen the state.

DHS received over 1,000 applications just days after new contact tracing job openings were announced. Interviews are planned for the week of May 11. DHS is coordinating the amount of tracers with the number of projected tests and positive cases with the goal of having 1,000 statewide tracers.

DHS is also evaluating technology options to facilitate communication and case

management, and increase the speed and efficiency with which individuals who may need to quarantine are identified and contacted.

“There is vital testing and contact tracing work being done right now in communities throughout Wisconsin, and we are proud to support these efforts,” said DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. “We also want to thank the people of Wisconsin for continuing to do their part to stay safer at home, and for answering this call by applying for contact tracing positions in record numbers.”