

Gov. Evers, DHS Secretary-designee Palm: Announce expansion of Wisconsin's COVID-19 community testing efforts

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today, with Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm, highlighted the expansion of COVID-19 testing across Wisconsin. This includes 71 new free community testing sites that will now be available in 56 counties and 7 tribal nations. These sites have the capacity to test approximately 48,000 people each week. Increasing access to testing for all individuals continues to be a major pillar of Wisconsin's statewide response plan, and these efforts will help meet this goal.

“Testing is a critically important part of our state's response to this pandemic, and we want to make it easier for those who need a test to get a test,” said Governor Evers. “Distance is one barrier that we can do something about, and one of the ways to address this issue is to offer testing in more places.”

Key information about the community testing sites:

- 71 new community testing sites are opening in October and will be available through December 10.
- 56 counties will host consistent COVID-19 testing sites.
- 7 tribal nations will be either hosting or co-hosting community testing sites.
- 35 testing sites will be available 1-3 days a week in 29 counties or tribal nations.
- 31 testing sites will be available every other week in 27 counties or tribal nations.
- 5 new sites will be available once a month in 3 counties.

The new sites are intended to ensure consistent access to testing in all regions of the state.

Each of the sites uses COVID Connect, the state's online testing registration and result system, and each has the capacity to collect 300-400 tests a day.

"Testing plays a critical role in protecting our friends and family from further spread of the virus and helps us to understand disease activity around the state," said Secretary-designee Palm. "If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, we encourage you to visit one of these testing sites, isolate away from others, and let your close contacts know they may have been exposed. Your efforts to keep those around you safe will help stop the spread."

Testing provides foundational information but is not enough to stop the spread. Actions taken after obtaining a test are the key to preventing further infections. These actions include quarantining while waiting for results, self-isolating and notifying contacts in the case of a positive result, and monitoring symptoms in the case of a negative result.

Each site represents a partnership between the State of Wisconsin Emergency Operations Center, the Wisconsin National Guard, local and tribal public health, and county and tribal emergency management. The Healthcare Emergency Readiness Coalition coordinators also played a key role in establishing sites across the state.

The community testing sites will be staffed by the Wisconsin National Guard citizen soldiers with one local site manager per site. In addition to the community testing sites, Wisconsin National Guard personnel may also provide testing support for outbreaks and emerging needs throughout the state. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Wisconsin National Guard has collected more than 700,000 tests and continues to enhance its testing capabilities. Last week, the community testing sites collected more than 45,000 tests and had a record-setting day on Tuesday, October 27 with the collection of more than 11,000 tests.

"Citizen Soldiers and Airmen from the Wisconsin National Guard continue to step up when called to assist their communities in times of need," said Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp. "Our troops have been continuously operating community-based testing sites since the early days of this pandemic, and we remain committed to serving our neighbors across Wisconsin with expanded testing efforts in the coming months."

A list of testing sites across the state is available at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/-covid-19/community-testing.htm>.

Community testing sites will be available through December 10 and are open to anyone who lives or works in Wisconsin. DHS encourages Wisconsinites to pre-register for testing using [COVID Connect](#) as close as possible to the time of their actual test to ensure accurate tracking of symptoms and exposure among those tested. People can also register for testing using COVID Connect at the physical testing site. There are people and devices available to assist in registration.

These community testing sites are funded by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Gov. Evers dedicated [more than \\$500 million in CARES funding](#) to support Wisconsin's testing efforts. CARES funding is set to expire at the end of December.