

‘UpFront’: Parisi says UW-Madison COVID-19 measures a good start, more action needed

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Dane County Exec Joe Parisi said moving to online instruction and other measures UW-Madison is taking to fight COVID-19 are a good start, but still urged officials to consider sending students home.

Dane County has seen hundreds of new COVID-19 cases and a “strong majority” of them are coming from UW, Parisi said Sunday on “UpFront,” produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

“We had (coronavirus) relatively under control, and it was steady. But since the UW has come here, we’ve shattered our previous record,” Parisi said.

“We’re concerned about the 40,000 students, but we’re also concerned about the other 500,000 who live in Dane County, because those students don’t live in a bubble and they can transmit the virus,” he said.

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Last week UW announced a two-week pause in in-person instruction and moved classes online. The university also put two residence halls and nearly two dozen fraternities and sororities under quarantine.

Parisi called the two-week pause a “good first step,” but said he wants to see UW do more, including:

- *Triple its capacity for contact tracers.
- *Increase its testing capabilities.
- *Provide more quarantine space for students who live off campus.

*Consider closing residence halls and sending students home.

“If they stay, they spread the disease in my community and they are congregating, so there is more of a risk for that,” Parisi said.

Also on the program, host Adrienne Pedersen asked two student government leaders whether it’s realistic to ask students to stop gathering to help slow the spread of coronavirus.

In another segment, outgoing Milwaukee Health Commissioner Dr. Jeanette Kowalik said she has experienced racism and sexism on the job.

“When I’m talking about racism, I’m talking about a variety of levels of racism. Whether they are microaggressions, various micro invalidations, micro insults, you know, being cut out of important conversations. Being cut out of various opportunities to make decisions, so on and so forth,” Kowalik said.

Kowalik is joining a national health policy think tank based in Washington, D.C. in a few weeks.

See more from the program:
<http://www.wisn.com/upfront>