

U.S. Rep. Kind: Votes for emergency funding to combat Coronavirus

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Washington, DC—Today, **Rep. Ron Kind** voted for an emergency funding package to combat the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The funding passed broad bipartisan support. The package includes funding for:

- The research and development of treatments and vaccines
- Equipment and medical supplies for states, local governments, and hospitals
- Health services through Community Health Centers, which will support smaller health clinics in rural areas like Wisconsin
- Funding for state and local government response efforts
- Low-interest Small Business Administration loan subsidies to help small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small aquaculture producers, and nonprofit organizations which have been impacted by financial losses as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak

The package also waives certain Medicare telehealth restrictions during the COVID-19 public health emergency, which would allow Medicare providers to furnish telehealth services to Medicare beneficiaries regardless of whether the beneficiary is in a rural community. **A complete summary of the package can be found [here.](#)**

“The health and safety of Wisconsinites is my top priority, and it’s crucial that communities across the state have access to the resources they need to combat the

spread of COVID-19,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “I’m glad to see the House act swiftly in a bipartisan manner to address this developing epidemic. Wisconsinites need a coordinated response, and this vital emergency response package will provide the robust public health funding needed for prevention, preparedness, and treatment of COVID-19, as well as alleviate the financial strain on state, local, and tribal governments and hospitals”

Rep. Ron Kind has been working with local, county, state, and federal public health officials to keep Wisconsinites informed and ensure Wisconsin is prepared. He recently sent a letter to Health & Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Director Robert Redfield [urging](#) them to provide functioning COVID-19 test kits to Wisconsin health officials after problems were found with the initial test kits provided by the CDC. Additionally, Rep. Kind sent a letter to Secretary Azar [encouraging](#) HHS to develop a plan to ensure rural hospitals have the resources necessary to prepare for potential cases of COVID-19 in rural communities.

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and has since spread to other locations internationally, including the United States. In response, HHS Secretary Azar [declared](#) a public health emergency on January 31, 2020, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has [advised](#) avoiding nonessential travel to China, Italy, South Korea, and Iran.

The virus is thought to [spread](#) mainly through close contact with an infected individual and through coughing and sneezing. [Symptoms](#) can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

[According to the CDC](#), “For most of the American public, who are unlikely to be

exposed to this virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.” Officials remain more concerned about the flu, which has already hospitalized between 310,000-560,000 Americans and even caused school closures here in Wisconsin’s Third District. There are a number of everyday [preventative actions](#) people can take to protect themselves from respiratory diseases—including the coronavirus. The CDC [recommends](#) the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask (facemasks are only needed for those who show symptoms of COVID-19).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Below are additional helpful resources, courtesy of the CDC, that will continue to have the most accurate and up to date information:

- [COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [Information for Travelers](#)
- [Key Facts about COVID-19](#)