

# AARP Wisconsin: COVID-19 deaths in Wisconsin nursing homes doubled from Aug. to Sept. 2021

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**MADISON** – COVID-19 continued to take a deadly toll on nursing home residents in Wisconsin in the four weeks leading up to Sept. 19, according to the latest data from AARP's monthly [Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Deaths related to COVID-19 in Wisconsin nursing homes increased from a rate of 0.05 per 100 residents in mid-August to 0.11 in mid-September. Nationally, resident deaths from coronavirus also doubled since the last Dashboard release, with more than 2,000 lives lost in nursing homes during the same time period. A total of 20 Wisconsin nursing home residents lost their lives to the virus during this time, the new data shows.

New infections among residents and staff in Wisconsin nursing homes is also on the rise. Resident cases soared from 0.3 per 100 residents in the four-week period ending Aug. 22 to 0.9 per 100 in the latest analysis. A total of 162 cases were reported. During the same time period, nursing home staff cases jumped from 1.5 per 100 residents to 2.5 per 100.

A total of 16.5 percent of Wisconsin nursing homes reported cases of COVID-19 within the last four weeks, and 93.1 percent of nursing homes have reported cases since January of 2020.

“Cases and deaths would be even higher if not for the availability of vaccines,

underscoring the importance of continuing access to COVID-19 vaccines and booster shots for eligible residents and staff,” said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson.

Vaccination rates among nursing home residents and staff also increased with 87.7 percent of residents and 65 percent of staff fully vaccinated as of September 19 (up from 86.5% and 62.4% in mid-August).

However, only 27.8 percent of Wisconsin nursing homes had at least 75 percent of staff vaccinated as of Sept. 19, which is up from 21.5 percent from the previous four-week period.

Nationally, more than half of health care staff in nursing homes are now vaccinated in every state. AARP has called on nursing homes and long-term care facilities to require that staff and residents be vaccinated against coronavirus, and the Biden Administration has announced plans to require vaccination for staff in nursing homes and most health care settings that receive Medicare or Medicaid payments.

In Wisconsin, shortages of staff and personal protective equipment (PPE) continues, with 51.2 percent of nursing homes reporting a staffing shortage and 5.1 percent noting an urgent need for more PPE.

“It’s now been one year since AARP began analyzing and reporting how COVID has infiltrated nursing homes across Wisconsin and the United States,” Wilson said. “Tragically, we are still seeing far too many infections and deaths in these facilities. It is past time to vaccinate all staff and residents and prevent yet another wave of this virus from taking more lives.”

Nationally, AARP has supported [several provisions in the reconciliation bill](#) currently before Congress that would help address long-standing issues in skilled nursing facilities and help ensure that residents are receiving quality care.

One provision AARP supports would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a study and submit a report to Congress on the appropriateness of establishing minimum staff to resident ratios for nursing staff in skilled nursing facilities and provide a process for implementation of such requirements.

The [AARP Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard](#) analyzes federally reported data in four-week periods going back to June 1, 2020. Using this data, the AARP Public

Policy Institute, in collaboration with the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University in Ohio, created the dashboard to provide snapshots of the virus' infiltration into nursing homes and impact on nursing home residents and staff, with the goal of identifying specific areas of concern at the national and state levels in a timely manner.

The full Dashboard is available at <http://www.aarp.org/nursinghomedashboard>.

AARP is providing information and resources about COVID-19 to help older Wisconsinites and has [developed key questions for families to ask](#) if a loved one is in a nursing home.

For more information on how COVID is impacting nursing homes and AARP's advocacy on this issue, visit [www.aarp.org/nursinghomes](http://www.aarp.org/nursinghomes). Medicare.gov's [Care Compare website](#) now offers information about vaccination rates within nursing homes and how they compare to state and national averages.