

AARP Wisconsin: New analysis shows COVID-19 cases & deaths declining in nursing homes

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MADISON – The latest release of AARP’s [Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard](#) shows that both cases and deaths in Wisconsin nursing homes fell in the four weeks ending Feb. 14. But AARP Wisconsin says that does not mean it’s time for nursing homes or state lawmakers to let our guard down.

Deaths of nursing home residents are less than half of what they were in the previous four-week time period, dropping from a rate of 1.36 per 100 residents to 0.5. New infections among residents and staff both declined more than threefold over the previous four weeks. Nursing home resident cases fell from 5.1 per 100 residents to 1.5, and new staff cases declined from 6.0 to 2.1 per 100 residents in the latest dashboard.

Despite these encouraging statistics, the dashboard reveals that staffing and shortages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) remain a significant problem in Wisconsin nursing homes. Shortages of PPE have decreased slightly over the same four-week period, from 27.2 percent of WI nursing homes without at least a one-week supply in January, to 25.8 percent in February.

Meanwhile, staffing shortages are improving, but remain a persistent problem, with 38.8 percent of facilities reporting a shortage in the most recent dashboard, which is down slightly from 39.7 in the previous four-week period.

“Decreasing numbers and vaccine rollout give hope, but we should not lose sight of the chronic, ongoing problems in our long-term care system that were exposed by COVID,” said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson.

While the latest data is showing that Wisconsin is moving in the right direction, Wilson said, “now is not the time to let down our guard”. He said policy leaders should not take away the rights of residents to hold nursing homes accountable when they fail to provide adequate care.

“The dashboard data over the last two months of 2020 painted a very dire picture for our nursing homes in Wisconsin, with accelerating numbers of cases and deaths throughout the state,” Wilson said. “At that time, we pleaded with everyone in our communities to redouble our health and safety efforts and prioritize the vaccination process for our vulnerable nursing home residents. Today’s nursing home dashboard release is proof positive that combination is working and working in a big way in Wisconsin.”

AARP Wisconsin will continue fighting for reforms that make nursing homes safe and provide options for seniors to stay in their homes.

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 Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard is available at www.aarp.org/nursinghomedashboard. For more information on how COVID is impacting nursing homes and AARP’s advocacy on this issue, visit www.aarp.org/nursinghomes.