

Milwaukee County: Amends universal face mask order, announces at-home vaccination program

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MILWAUKEE — Today, Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley announced amendments to the County's Universal Face Mask Order as well as the launch of an at-home vaccination program to ensure people who have difficulty leaving their home have access to a vaccine.

As of June 1, 2021, the County's Universal Face Mask Order is being changed to the following for all fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people:

	MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	COUNTY EMPLOYEES
INDOORS	COVID-protocols, including masking and social distancing, will continue to be required indoors at all County facilities. This includes masking at private, indoor events.	COVID-protocols, including masking and social distancing, will continue to be required indoors at all County facilities or inside other places where services are delivered (e.g., home visits).
OUTDOORS	Members of the public will no longer be required to wear masks while outdoors at County-owned properties.	County employees will be required to wear masks outdoors at times when they cannot maintain 6 feet of distance with other people. When distance can be maintained, employees may remove their masks.

“Since the pandemic began, the County has made a careful, measured and intentional effort to protect the health and wellbeing of all Milwaukee County residents by leaning into equitable strategies and policies,” said County Executive David Crowley. “Our commitment to data-driven decisions that are in the best interest of the broader County community continues today.”

Milwaukee County services and programs meet the needs of some of the area’s most vulnerable populations – populations the CDC recommends continue to follow masking and other risk mitigation practices. Additionally, Milwaukee County operates many services that align to the settings called out by the CDC to continue masking, such as the jail, House of Correction, the hospital run by the Behavioral Health Division, public buses, the airport, and a courts system.

“With more than 4,000 County employees, we must also consider how best to protect our dedicated workforce, who are critical to delivering essential services to the community every day,” said Crowley.

Though great progress has been made in the County’s fight against COVID-19, transmission rates are currently high in our community and vaccination rates are not yet where they need to be, with only 36.5% of residents having received their full vaccine series.

(Statistics as of May 18, 2021. Source: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/-covid-19/vaccine-data.htm>)

Milwaukee County officials will continually review and evaluate updated information and the latest data to guide future decisions. Ultimately, transmission levels and vaccination rates will be key inputs into decisions around future amendments to the County’s Universal Face Mask Order and other public health administrative orders.

“The best path forward for Milwaukee County is for as many members of our community to be vaccinated as soon as possible, which means we must do everything we can to ensure that anyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccine can get one,” said Crowley.

COUNTY ANNOUNCES “HEALTHY HOMES”

With this commitment in mind, Milwaukee County has launched “Healthy Homes,” Milwaukee County’s Free At-Home COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

Healthy Homes will help ensure individuals who have difficulty leaving their home have access to a COVID-19 vaccination. Nationally, approximately 6% of individuals on Medicare have difficulty leaving their homes. In Milwaukee County, that represents about 9,500 community members.

“Milwaukee County is committed to doing everything we can to ensure that anyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccine can get one. Each county resident has unique needs and some of those needs can unfortunately create barriers to obtaining care. To eliminate those barriers, Healthy Homes meets residents where they are and brings vaccines directly into their homes,” said County Executive David Crowley. “It shouldn’t be the case that you aren’t vaccinated, or that your general health care takes a bad turn, just because you cannot access the medical system traditionally. We can create healthier communities not by just making services accessible, but by physically meeting residents where they are and connecting them to needed services like life-saving COVID-19 vaccines.”

Healthy Homes, Milwaukee County’s at-home COVID-19 vaccination program, is designed to meet the needs of individuals who have difficulty leaving their homes, including those who need the help of another person or medical equipment to leave their home, or those whose medical provider believes their health or illness may

worsen if they leave their home. These individuals often face obstacles in accessing a vaccine and other needed services.

The newly announced program is rooted in Milwaukee County's commitment to using data to drive decision-making. Program participants will be in part prioritized for outreach using the Evaluating Vulnerability and Equity (EVE) Model, which continues to guide equitable COVID-19 vaccine deployment strategies across the County. The program builds upon the work already underway by the City of Milwaukee, local health departments, and other local vaccinators to reach this vulnerable population by taking a hyper-targeted approach. The Healthy Homes program hopes to leverage community input in addition to existing lists and data from County and partner programs to proactively make phone calls to individuals who have difficulty leaving their home, and who may not have already been reached by previous programs, to ensure they have access to vaccines.

In addition to providing COVID-19 vaccines, in line with Milwaukee County's "No Wrong Door" effort, vaccinators will be trained to connect community members with other County services as needed, such as housing, meals, or transportation services. Through the No Wrong Door model, the County's Department of Health and Human Services has led the way in bridging the gap in health disparities by ensuring that no matter how an individual comes in contact with Milwaukee County, there is 'no wrong door' for someone to enter to receive all the services they may need.

"We are doing everything we can to break down barriers to accessing care, including receiving a COVID-19 vaccine," said Crowley. "We need the community to join us and help connect those in need with available services, including this at-home vaccine option."

If a person needs, or knows someone who needs, an at-home vaccination they should visit <https://www.healthymke.com/healthyhomes> or call 414-257-SHOT

(7468) if they need help filling out the form.