

UW-Stout: Statement from Dunn County Community Recovery Team and Chancellor's Coalition on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

Posted on Wednesday, Mar 10, 2021

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We are reaching out to the community with important messages as Menomonie, Dunn County and the entire Chippewa Valley continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first message concerns those engaged in the dispensing of alcohol in our community. The university adjusted its academic calendar this spring to forego a spring break to do everything possible to keep the campus and community safe and healthy. The university has experienced a reduction in incidents that involve high-risk behavior related to alcohol use. Furthermore, the university is experiencing incredibly low positivity rates as it continues vigorous testing for all its students and employees.

However, as St. Patrick's Day approaches, it is essential for those in the hospitality industry to help continue that trend. We are jointly asking for those business owners to continue to operate within the CDC guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID and limit the opportunity for unhealthy and high-risk alcohol consumption.

In addition, we are asking that all community members continue to practice the health and safety habits that are leading to a reduction in cases and deaths in our community: wearing masks when out in public, maintaining social distancing, practicing good hand hygiene and avoiding large gatherings. These practices work

to reduce the spread of the virus and still are essential, even as more members of our community receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

We also want to emphasize how important it is for all community members to receive their COVID-19 vaccination when they become eligible under state guidelines. The Dunn County Public Health Department has a website dedicated to answering COVID-19 questions and providing resources for getting a vaccine. That website is available at: <https://www.co.dunn.wi.us/covidinfo>.

Finally, if you are planning a trip this spring, please practice safe and healthy habits both during your trip and when you return to avoid any chance of spreading the virus.

With spring coming, there is reason to be optimistic that the impact of this pandemic is waning in our community. But that just means everything we have done to date to combat it is working, and we must remain vigilant until the virus is defeated.

Signed:

Dunn County Community Recovery Team

Chancellor's Coalition on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse