

# County Executive Parisi: Extending emergency hotel shelter for homeless may be needed due to resurgence of COVID-19

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Due to the recent increase in Covid-19 cases in the community, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi has asked staff to explore the feasibility of extending the county's emergency hotel shelter program for individuals experiencing homelessness who are considered at higher-risk for severe illness from Covid-19 and those who are in need of isolation/quarantine due to Covid-19 positivity/symptoms.

"We made a commitment at the outset of the pandemic to do all we can to help protect our most vulnerable, and while our work continues to secure permanent housing, emergent needs persist and they're magnified by the recent surge in Covid-19 case counts and hospitalizations," Parisi said.

He noted Dane County has seen a 75% increase in the number of Covid-19 positive individuals in the past two weeks alone, while hospitalizations are up 46% in Dane County.

"While many have moved on and shifted focus away from the pandemic, the effects of this ever-changing virus are still being felt and vulnerable populations remain at risk," Parisi said.

Dane County's Emergency Covid-19 Hotel Housing Program debuted in mid-2020. It is currently set to sunset at the end of June, but Parisi has asked county staff to talk with local hotels and service providers about potentially extending services into

next year given federal projections of a renewed surge in Covid-19 this fall. To date, Dane County has spent \$23.1 million on its Emergency Covid-19 Hotel Housing Program. The county is currently utilizing around 170 hotel rooms for homeless sheltering for individuals at higher-risk and those in need of isolation and quarantine shelter.

Allocating an additional \$3 million, plus funding currently allocated, for this work would allow an estimated 120 individuals to socially distance outside of congregate shelter and have safer housing for the next 8 months.