

Dept. of Health Services: Gov. Evers and DHS recognize state workers and interagency cooperation for PPE distribution in Wisconsin

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Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) today recognized the dedication, resilience, and ingenuity of the state agencies and workers involved in building a program to acquire, maintain, and distribute the state's [personal protective equipment \(PPE\) stockpile](#). The effort has supported a range of organizations across the state, each with different needs, from polling places to childcare facilities.

"Almost as quickly as the COVID-19 pandemic became a threat to our state, our state workers and partners stepped up to the plate to get the job done to distribute scarce PPE resources," said Gov. Evers. "The Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Emergency Management, members of the Wisconsin National Guard, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and many, many other state and local agencies took off running to get resources out to keep Wisconsinites safe."

"When agency leaders started to organize, it was clear that our PPE inventory wasn't designed for a crisis of the magnitude we've seen in the last two years, but our state agencies rose to the challenge, especially the stockpile warehouse team who designed and implemented a plan," said DHS Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge. "This feat of organization would not have been achieved without the help of our private warehouse partner, who provided outstanding distribution and storage resources."

In March of 2020, the DHS Receipt, Stage, Store (RSS) warehouse was activated to accept and distribute shipments from the federal Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). As the pandemic surged across the nation, DHS staff prepared the warehouse according to federal standards and coordinated with the Wisconsin State Patrol and DNR to provide security to the inventory. DHS epidemiologists developed an algorithm to ensure the equitable distribution of PPE while the warehouse team conducted quality assurance evaluations, managed inventory and distribution, and developed an emergency request system to respond to urgent needs.

Over the last two years, the DHS RSS warehouse distributed over 80 million pieces of PPE and other supplies to every corner of the state. Highlights from these efforts include:

- Delivering more than 10 million face masks and 6,500 thermometers to thousands of childcare facilities and schools
- Partnering with County and Tribal emergency managers to deliver 36 million pieces of PPE for further distribution to hundreds of local entities
- Providing 10 million pieces of PPE to support the work of state agencies
- Distributing four million pieces of PPE in coordination with the Wisconsin Election Commission to make polling sites safer
- Delivering 5.7 million N95 and K95 masks to communities, nonprofit organizations, and others to distribute to Wisconsinites

In addition to receipt, storage, and distribution of PPE, the effort also procured 1,500 loanable ventilators in 2020, ensuring access to facilities in need through a Ventilator Stewardship Program.

Leading the two-year effort are DHS and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM), with staff support from other agencies including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Wisconsin National Guard. Many other state agencies and organizations, such as the Civil Air Patrol and the Department of Children and Families, were also involved in PPE distribution through a variety of projects.

Today, DHS continues Wisconsin's emergency preparedness through a new Warehouse Unit that is leading the ongoing receipt and storage of Wisconsin's PPE stockpile, and continuing distributions to long-term care facilities, local and tribal public health agencies, and many other organizations across the state. The unit is currently managing distribution of child-size face masks and KN95 masks to

childcare providers and school programs, while ensuring preparedness for future disasters.