

# Dept. of Health Services: Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake's statement about Thank You Tour stop in St. Croix County

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“Today was a great visit with our Thank You Tour hosts at St. Croix County Health and Human Services Department. We are so appreciative of those who were able to join us today to help recognize the COVID-19 response efforts in northwestern Wisconsin. We are in a moment where although the pandemic is not fully behind us, it is important to reflect on where we have been and what we have learned, to celebrate our accomplishments so far, and recommit to the work that is before us.

We know in the past 25 months, many across our state who have served on the front lines have done so at professional and personal costs. The work we have done has been in the name of serving Wisconsin, to make sure people had the information and resources they needed to make critical decisions for themselves and their families. As we move forward together, it's important that we take a moment to acknowledge the trauma and grief caused by the losses we have experienced from COVID-19. The Thanks You Tour is allowing us to see and hear about these experiences while we also recognize and celebrate the difficult work our communities have done.

Our partners across the state have done a tremendous job connecting with their communities to address COVID-19 together. It is amazing to hear people's stories about the resilience of how local groups united to serve Wisconsinites. Community partnerships and resilience will get us through as we recover from the mental health impacts of COVID-19.

The different sectors and organizations represented at today's event are a great illustration of the strong relationships that have been built across the spectrum of those involved with the COVID-19 response. Today was also an opportunity to emphasize the importance of staying aware of changing community conditions and using all the layers of protection needed to stop the spread of COVID-19. This includes getting vaccinated and boosted when you are eligible, getting tested if you have symptoms, wearing a well-fitting mask when appropriate given personal circumstances or community conditions, and staying home when you are sick.

A special thank you to the St. Croix County Health and Human Services Department for hosting us today.