

Gov. Evers: Announces Wisconsin National Guard to support hospital and nursing home capacity

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced new efforts with the Wisconsin National Guard to bring needed staffing support to Wisconsin's hospitals and nursing homes by training Wisconsin National Guard members as certified nursing assistants. In an effort to free up capacity at hospitals, staffing relief will allow skilled nursing facilities to open up 200 or more beds by the end of February to receive post-acute care patients. This week, approximately 50 Wisconsin National Guard members were deployed to six nursing homes across the state. A group of about 80 members who started training this week will deploy at the end of January. Another group of about 80 members will start training in early February to deploy by the end of February.

The news comes as last week, the Evers Administration provided an [update](#) on its efforts to support Wisconsin's healthcare system by working with staffing agencies to recruit staff for health and residential care providers. As of Jan. 12, 2022, the Evers Administration has worked with staffing agencies to recruit 626 nurses, nursing assistants, and other types of health care workers to support 76 health and residential care facilities like hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted living facilities across the state.

"As we continue to see COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations surge, we are pursuing every available option to bring needed staffing support to Wisconsin's health systems," said Gov. Evers. "I'm proud to announce our new partnership with Madison College to provide training to Wisconsin National Guard members so by the end of February we can welcome more than 200 new certified nursing assistants in nursing homes across our state and expand capacity."

“As cases of Omicron continue to surge, this support is critical for supporting Wisconsin’s nursing homes,” said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. “We continue to hear from our nursing home providers that they need more support to care for patients as our health system continues to be stressed by nearly two years of a global pandemic. Our new partnership with Madison College and the Wisconsin National Guard will help us ensure Wisconsinites have access to the care they need and help us increase critical healthcare capacity.”

Support for Wisconsin’s healthcare system is critical as Wisconsin continues to see an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases. The state is reporting a record 13,004 new confirmed COVID-19 cases today, bringing the current seven-day average to 9,915. The seven-day average has nearly doubled over the past two weeks and is now 50 percent higher than the November 2020 peak. Wisconsin is also seeing a record number of patients in intensive care units with COVID-19, at 488. There are currently 2,278 total COVID-19 patients in the state, an increase of 276 patients over the past week.

“The Wisconsin National Guard has been heavily engaged in the battle against COVID-19 since day one of this pandemic,” said Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp. “We see ourselves as neighbors helping neighbors, and when we say that, we mean it. We will continue to assist our state in any way we can because we live and work in these same communities across Wisconsin.”

The Wisconsin National Guard has been a critical partner in helping Wisconsin respond to the COVID-19 pandemic since it started nearly two years ago and has played a key role in supporting COVID-19 testing and vaccination. Since the pandemic began, the Wisconsin National Guard has administered approximately 1.2 million COVID tests, more than 230,000 vaccines, and has taken on a variety of other missions ranging from assisting medical examiners, staffing a state call center to inform residents of test results, managing vaccines stockpiles and personal protective equipment warehouses, staffing self-isolation facilities, and now providing direct care as certified nursing assistants.

“Our healthcare providers are beyond exhausted. We simply do not have enough staff to care for all those who are ill,” said Dr. Lisa Greenwood, Madison College’s associate dean of nursing. “This historic partnership between Madison College and the National Guard is critical in providing Wisconsin communities and the healthcare industry the help they desperately need in the fight against COVID-19.”

For up-to-date information about Wisconsin’s COVID-19 response, visit the [DHS COVID-19 webpage](#). We encourage you to follow @DHSWI on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or



dhs.wi on [Instagram](#) for more information on COVID-19.