

Gov. Evers: Announces Wisconsin to join growing coalition of states in joining World Health Organization Global Outbreak Alert Response Network

Posted on Tuesday, Feb 17, 2026

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

By joining, Wisconsin gains critical access to global early-warning alerts, international trainings to bolster local response to outbreaks, stronger coordination between state's public health systems and global response efforts

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers tonight, during his 2026 State of the State address, announced that in the coming weeks, he will sign an executive order affirming that the state of Wisconsin will join the World Health Organization's (WHO) [Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network](#) (GOARN). Joining state partners like [Illinois](#), [California](#), and [New York](#), Wisconsin will aid GOARN in its work to coordinate the dispersal of information and resources in response to global public health emergencies. This growing coalition comes amid recent news that, as of January 2026, the U.S. had officially separated from WHO, following President Donald J. Trump's decision to [withdraw](#) last year, undoing nearly a century of collaboration between the U.S. and world leaders on issues of global health and safety.

In addition, to further strengthen Wisconsin's ability to address public health needs, the state will also be joining a coalition of 15 governors in the [Governor's Public Health Alliance](#) to bring Wisconsin into the fold of the alliance's work to improve preparedness, coordination, and access to critical health resources nationwide.

Relevant excerpts from Gov. Evers' 2026 State of the State address are available below:

"...I'm also worried about the impacts of President Trump's so-called 'Big Beautiful Bill.' If Republican lawmakers don't approve resources the state needs to keep FoodShare payment errors low, Wisconsin taxpayers could have to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in penalty fees to the Trump Administration every year under the 'BBB.' And let me be clear: that's on top of the more than \$284 million we're already estimating Wisconsin taxpayers will have to pay in future budgets.

"The sooner the Legislature invests in FoodShare quality control efforts, the more time the state has to keep FoodShare error rates down. It's pretty simple. We can save Wisconsin taxpayers potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in penalty fees a year we could have to pay the Trump Administration if we don't. I'm not negotiating with Republicans about a \$70 million investment the state must make right now to save Wisconsin taxpayers as much as \$200 million in penalty fees later. We've been asking for this for months, and it has to get done. If the Legislature fails to provide the funding the state needs, Republicans will be to blame for the penalty fees taxpayers will be forced to pay. It's pretty simple. Get it done.

"And that's not all. Healthcare costs are skyrocketing. Wisconsinites already don't feel like they're getting a fair shake when it comes to insurance coverage. And now, because of that so-called 'Big Beautiful Bill,' over 270,000 Wisconsinites will lose their healthcare. Because Republicans in Congress refuse to extend the tax credits under the Affordable Care Act that make healthcare more affordable for millions of Americans, many are going to be priced out. I talked to Kim, a small business owner in Green Bay, whose healthcare coverage went up 500 percent this year. She had enough money to pay for one month of healthcare coverage. And then she's going to go without. Wisconsinites across our state will be forced to do the same.

"Congress must fix the healthcare crisis they've created, or every member of Congress from Wisconsin and beyond who allowed this to happen should be held accountable at the ballot box.

"I'm not a rocket scientist, but I did teach biology in Baraboo. Maybe if we want to make Americans and Wisconsinites "healthy" again, making healthcare affordable

and accessible would be a great place to start. We could also start by trusting the science, public health experts, and medical professionals who have eradicated diseases and found cures and kept us healthy and safe for decades.

“Folks, public health isn’t a partisan issue, and it isn’t up for debate. And real lives are at stake if we fail to listen. It’s why, in the coming weeks, I’ll sign an executive order to have Wisconsin join the World Health Organization’s Global Response Network. We must do what we can to keep our kids, our families, and our communities healthy and safe. ...”

Established in 2000, GOARN represents over 360 technical partnerships across the world with the purpose of consolidating efforts for the rapid identification, confirmation, and response to public health emergencies of international importance.

By joining GOARN, Wisconsin is strengthening public health systems, enhancing local preparedness, and bolstering international partnerships by gaining access to:

- Timely and direct access to global early-warning alerts, outbreak intelligence, and data sharing;
- International trainings, including outbreak response scenario training;
- Opportunities for technical collaboration, operational research, and surge support during major public health events; and
- Stronger coordination between state-level public health systems and global response efforts.

Joining the Governor’s Public Health Alliance and GOARN will not only strengthen the state’s capacity to respond quickly and appropriately to health threats but will also help to counteract the Trump Administration’s reckless actions to dismantle public health resources across the country.

Additionally, this announcement also comes as, late last year, in response to the Trump Administration’s decision to arbitrarily limit access to safe vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine, which was originally authorized and approved “without cutting corners in safety or effectiveness” under the previous Trump Administration, Gov. Evers [signed](#) Executive Order #275, directing the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to use every lever and take every action available to ensure Wisconsinites can access safe, effective vaccines to help keep

themselves and their families safe.

In the first year of his second term, President Trump and his administration attacked public health relentlessly and have continuously undermined science and the decisions of medical professionals and public health experts, including, but not limited to, [threatening](#) to:

- Eliminate the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and all associated funding, which would result in Wisconsin losing \$3.6 million annually for cancer control, including funds that support local activities across the state;
- Eliminate \$4.1 million annually to improve nutrition and physical activity and for the prevention of diabetes and heart disease;
- Eliminate the Coverdell Program, which provides direct funding and assistance to 69 hospital partners, 31 EMS providers, and 19 other community organizations in Wisconsin, taking away \$600,000 annually that helps ensure quality care for stroke patients in rural Wisconsin and across our state;
- Permanently eliminate the funding that has supported comprehensive tobacco control efforts and quit lines;
 - The Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line is a free service that has helped more than 200,000 people. Through the president's budget, Wisconsin would lose \$1.6 million annually to prevent tobacco-related deaths and help people quit smoking.
- Eliminate the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, which would result in Wisconsin losing \$3.5 million annually that helps local and Tribal health departments invest in locally identified priorities that support their accountability, effectiveness, and community health improvement infrastructure;
- Eliminate the Hospital Preparedness Program, as well as supplemental funding to prepare for an avian flu outbreak, taking \$4.8 million annually from Wisconsin and leaving our health care system less prepared to respond to crises; and
- Eliminate the Title X Family Planning program and other funding that goes directly to local organizations, with Wisconsin losing \$4.2 million annually that helps all people access these essential health care services.

Additionally, in May, the Trump Administration made several cuts to dismantle the

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which included, but were not limited to:

- Canceling a critical test for the bird flu virus, suspending that program for the year, and terminating top veterinarians overseeing the bird flu response, undermining nationwide efforts to respond to the emerging health threat;
- Closing Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration offices designed to help support Wisconsinites and Americans working to overcome substance misuse and mental and behavioral health challenges, including the 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline program; and
- Laying off and terminating approximately a quarter—about 20,000 HHS employees—whose responsibilities included but were not limited to vaccine researchers, grant administration, responding to lead exposure incidents, answering public information requests to ensure government accountability and transparency, and specialists who help provide care and assistance to senior and aging and older adults, among others.

Further, the Trump Administration [announced](#) it would be stripping over \$4 billion in federal funding for medical research at universities, hospitals, and other scientific institutions, including stripping over \$20 million in federal funding for life-saving medical research within the University of Wisconsin (UW) System. Since the Trump Administration cut funding for medical research, UW-Madison [has reportedly](#) seen a roughly 17 percent decline in federal funding.