September 22, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Public Health Organizations Support Emergency Order Announcement

(Kimberly, WI) – September 22, 2020 – Following Governor Evers' issuing Executive Order #90 and Emergency Order #1, the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB) and Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA) issued the following statement:

"WALHDAB and WPHA support Governor Evers' order to for a new statewide face covering requirement. Since college students returned to UW campuses, the state's confirmed cases have exploded. Since September 1 alone, Wisconsin has experienced over 20,000 new cases with the most severe spikes in communities with college campuses.

"Many Wisconsin communities are now ranked at the top of the list nationally for most rapid COVID growth. For example, La Crosse County is ranked #1 in the nation for rapid COVID growth, and 89.5% of cases over the last 3 to 4 weeks occurring in individuals ages 15 - 29, in comparison to 53% over the summer months.

"Wisconsin is facing a serious situation and following public health best practices is crucial to navigating the situation safely. Today's face covering order ensures Wisconsin follows CDC guidelines and best practices. In combination with social distancing and regular handwashing, wearing a face covering is an essential component in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Today's order helps to prevent a dire situation from becoming worse. We've said it before: masking is not a partisan political issue; it is a public health necessity."

Together, WPHA and WALHDAB represent over 1,200 public health professionals in communities across Wisconsin, striving to prevent, promote, and protect the citizens of the state. WPHA and WALHDAB actively engage in legislative advocacy and we are committed to promoting a healthy population and workforce.