

# WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

*Assure safe and healthy people by monitoring progress on the state health plan  
and on the readiness for public health emergencies.*



## **Resolution by the Wisconsin Public Health Council Recognizing the Efforts of the Wisconsin Public Health System during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

WHEREAS, the Public Health Council was created by 2003 Wisconsin Act 186 to advise the Department of Health Services, the Governor, the Legislature and the public on progress in implementing the state's 10-year public health plan and coordination of responses to public health emergencies; and

WHEREAS, the Public Health Council is comprised of Wisconsin residents, health care consumers, and professionals with deep expertise and experience in health care, public health and emergency response who share a vision that Wisconsin will become the healthiest state through the delivery of evidence-based and cost-effective practices and policies; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin has witnessed first-hand through the Coronavirus pandemic the value and necessity of robust, integrated, coordinated and resourced public health infrastructure to ensure the health and safety of all people of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin's local and state public health personnel have diligently navigated a complex and rapidly changing landscape of the pandemic, including marked waxing and waning of case activity, hospitalizations, and deaths as a result of the COVID-19 since the first documented Wisconsin case in February 2020; and

WHEREAS, our public health personnel have established and strengthened partnerships between local, state, and federal agency staff as well as community-based organizations, hospital systems, emergency management personnel, first responders, local boards and councils, schools, and businesses to provide a response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin public health system has been integral in the procurement, storage, and distribution of necessary personal protective equipment and medical materiel to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including masks, gowns, face shields and eye protection, testing supplies and equipment, ventilators, post-exposure prophylactic medications, and vaccines; and

WHEREAS, public health personnel have tirelessly worked to develop and provide recommendations and guidance to enhance the health and safety of the people of the State of Wisconsin through safe and appropriate use of masking, social distancing, testing, limiting exposure to disease, connection to treatment, vaccination considerations, and other strategies to mitigate risk for infection; and

WHEREAS, public health personnel have worked to ensure consistent and reliable COVID-19 testing capabilities are available and accessible to all Wisconsin residents to establish a comprehensive system for tracking case activity, disease vectors, and outbreak identification; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin public health system has built an extensive network of contact tracers to interview and provide information to persons with diagnosed COVID-19 to reduce further disease spread; and

WHEREAS, the capacity for widespread access to safe, effective, and free COVID-19 vaccinations would not be possible without the efforts to enhance access to and provide outreach to underserved and vaccine-hesitant populations by our public health personnel; and

WHEREAS, public health staff have leveraged a wide range of data collection and informatics resources to provide broad surveillance of disease activity, systems capabilities, and population characteristics to provide our partners, stakeholders, and the general public with key information to assist decision-making, enhance guidance and give an overall understanding of the depth and scale of the pandemic environment; and

WHEREAS, the Coronavirus pandemic has raised the visibility of the negative impacts of social determinants of health<sup>1</sup> and the disparities in health care access and outcomes on individuals, families and communities across Wisconsin, to which our public health personnel have been working to ensure that every person has the opportunities, resources, and supports needed to stay safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic, regardless of their lived experience and identity; and

WHEREAS, our public health staff have served not only as our central source of response and mitigation resources during the COVID-19 pandemic but have also continued to maintain the core essential functions of public health infrastructure and services such as communicable disease control, chronic disease and injury prevention, environmental public health, maternal and child health, access to and linkage with clinical care, emergency preparedness and response, community partnership development, assessment and surveillance, and other key functional responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, despite considerable stress and demands on public health staff, and despite historical and chronic deficiencies in funding support for our public health infrastructure, our public health system has continued to fulfill its mission to ensure and improve the health and well-being of all Wisconsinites; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the Wisconsin Public Health Council recognize and commend our local, Tribal, and state public health personnel and their partners for their selfless devotion to service and extend sincere gratitude for keeping Wisconsinites healthy and safe; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution are transmitted to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, all members of the Wisconsin Legislature, the DHS Secretary and Deputy Secretary, leadership of local boards of health, all local and tribal health departments in the state of Wisconsin, the leadership of the Wisconsin Public Health Association, the leadership of the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, and members of the media.

Adopted by the Executive Committee of the Wisconsin Public Health Council on this Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> DHS Resilient Wisconsin: Social Determinants of Health <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/resilient/social-determinants.htm>