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## **Leading Wisconsin Advocacy Groups Launch “Stop the COVID Spread!” Coalition to Combat COVID Crisis**

*Prominent Wisconsin health care, business organizations unveil effort to slow pandemic spread*

**Madison, WI** - As the pace of COVID-19 infections continues to increase rapidly in Wisconsin, a robust group of the state’s leading advocacy organizations have launched a new coalition aimed at combatting the growing COVID-19 crisis.

“Stop the COVID Spread!” is a coalition of more than twenty of Wisconsin’s leading health care, business, and advocacy organizations who have joined together in a campaign to educate the public about the seriousness of the pandemic and the critical need for preventative measures including social distancing, hand washing, and the use of protective masks. The organization held a press conference today addressing the looming public health crisis that is threatening to overwhelm health care systems around the state.

“As Wisconsin faces a surge of COVID-19 infections, we are also seeing a surge in hospitalizations and other related effects that are straining hospital capacity and other resources,” said Eric Borgerding, Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) President and CEO. “Applying preventative measures is absolutely crucial to curbing the spread of this virus and its impacts on our state. We are urging the public to please take the virus seriously and double down on all of these measures to help control the pandemic.”

The new coalition builds on previous statewide efforts to educate Wisconsinites about the public health crisis, including a series of public service announcements launched by various partner organizations encouraging the use of crucial safety measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

“The WRA has been committed to providing restaurants with the latest information and resources on keeping employees and customers safe and encourage all restaurants to follow public health guidelines and best practices,” said Kristine Hillmer, President & CEO of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association, one of the co-chairs of the new coalition. “The majority of restaurants in Wisconsin have been vigilant in taking these safety precautions very seriously and we urge them to continue these efforts.”

“Grocers across the state have always focused on cleanliness and sanitation as an everyday business practice. When the pandemic hit, grocers upped their game to the highest levels,” added Brandon Scholz, President & CEO Wisconsin Grocers Association, another coalition co-chair. “We hope that others will join our commitment and take on responsibility to do what they can to help stop the spread!”

Coalition efforts will include a new public service announcement on broadcast channels statewide, as well as a digital advertising campaign. These campaigns will urge Wisconsin residents to take preventative measures seriously in order to keep the state’s health care system stable and accessible,

protect the health and safety of workers, and prevent further shutdown of Wisconsin businesses and economic functions.

“Communities all around Wisconsin are facing a COVID-19 crisis,” said Mark O’Connell, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Counties Association. “By working together, we hope that we can help demonstrate the seriousness of the current public health crisis and show that employing personal preventative measures is something that all Wisconsin residents can do to help slow the spread.”

Each of the coalition member organizations will also be engaging their own staff and members on employing preventative measures to help combat the growing public health crisis.

“Wisconsin’s employers have taken countless steps to ensure workers, customers and the public are protected, but we must all continue to observe these guidelines and best practices outside the workplace,” added Kurt Bauer, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce President & CEO. “To ensure a robust economic comeback, our business leaders must also be community leaders as we all work together to slow the spread and safely reopen our economy.”

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*For more information about the Stop the Spread coalition and the importance of safe behaviors for both public and state economic health, visit [www.wha.org/stopthecovidspread](http://www.wha.org/stopthecovidspread) or contact one of the coalition co-chairs:*

Wisconsin Hospital Association – Myranda Tanck, [mt@platform-communications.com](mailto:mt@platform-communications.com)

Wisconsin Grocers Association – Brandon Scholz, [brandon@wisconsinagrocers.com](mailto:brandon@wisconsinagrocers.com)

Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce – Nick Novak, [nnovak@wmc.org](mailto:nnovak@wmc.org)

Wisconsin Restaurant Association – Tracy Kosbau, [tkosbau@wirerestaurant.org](mailto:tkosbau@wirerestaurant.org)

Wisconsin Counties Association – Mark D. O’Connell, [connell@wicounties.org](mailto:connell@wicounties.org)

*The growing coalition is currently made up of the following organizations:*

- Wisconsin Hospital Association, CO-CHAIR
- Wisconsin Counties Association, CO-CHAIR
- Wisconsin Grocers Association, CO-CHAIR
- Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC), CO-CHAIR
- Wisconsin Restaurant Association, CO-CHAIR
- LeadingAge Wisconsin
- League of Municipalities
- Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC)
- Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin
- Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative
- UW System
- Wisconsin Association of Health Plans
- Wisconsin Bankers Association
- Wisconsin Builders Association
- Wisconsin Dental Association
- Wisconsin Health Care Association / Wisconsin Center for Assisted Living

- Wisconsin Healthcare Business Forum
- Wisconsin Medical Society
- Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers & Convenience Store Association
- Wisconsin Realtors Association
- Wisconsin Safety Council
- Wisconsin State Telecommunication Association
- Wisconsin Technology Council