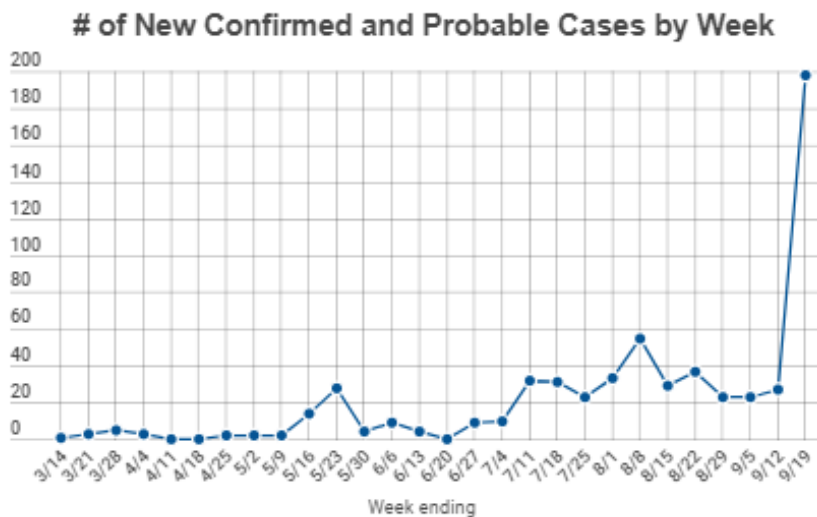




### PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY:

## PIERCE COUNTY COVID-19 CALL TO ACTION, REVISED 9.25.20

This is an update on our original advisory released May 15<sup>th</sup> 2020. We are experiencing a surge of COVID-19 cases with increased spread at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls as well as large exposures in K-12 schools. Measures are being taken to address the increase of cases, including testing and increased containment efforts at the university and increased physical distancing at several K-12 schools. While the surge in younger cases has not resulted in many adverse health outcomes among this age group at this time, we are seeing evidence of infections quickly spreading from this age group to their families and coworkers.



In order to protect our most vulnerable people in our community, we must keep levels of disease in our community at a manageable level. Due to the recent surge in cases, Pierce County is currently at the tipping point for uncontrolled spread of COVID-19. Pierce County Public Health is implementing internal crisis standards of care for disease investigations, meaning we have to prioritize timely contact tracing for the most high-risk situations. Unless we can quickly decrease the spread of COVID-19 as a community, not all close contacts will be notified in 24 hours and businesses and schools may experience a delay in response to exposures in those locations.

The recommendations in this advisory include limiting the activities that put Pierce County residents at highest risk. Pierce County continues to monitor the situation closely and will consider taking more restriction measures if we are unable to reverse this trend. Please join us



#### TALK TO US

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412 W Kinne St  
Ellsworth, WI 54011

#### OUR MISSION

To promote healthy behaviors, prevent disease and injury, and protect against environmental hazards

in continuing to monitor the latest data through our [data dashboard](#).

1. **Mass gathering limitations.** Pierce County has developed new criteria for mass gathering limitations in partnership with several other Western Wisconsin region health departments. Going forward, Pierce County’s mass gathering limitations will be based on the [Harvard Path to Zero](#) framework for [disease levels per county](#).<sup>1</sup> These risk levels are less conservative than the WI DHS activity level metrics, but are more appropriate for this phase of the pandemic. At the time of publication for this advisory, **Pierce County has been in the Tipping Point level of disease for two weeks** and Wisconsin has the third highest rate of new cases over the last seven days.

Risk Level Description	Daily New Cases Per 100,000 Population+	Daily New Cases for Pierce County Equivalent+*	Indoor Gathering Limits*	Outdoor Gathering Limits
On Track to Contain	<1	<.42	150	250
Community Spread	1<10	.42<4.2	75	150
Accelerated Spread	10<25	4.2<10.5	25	75
Tipping Point	>25	>10.5	10	25

+Measured as a rolling 7-day average (averages the daily case counts for the last 7 days and divides by 7)

\*Based on Pierce County population of 42K

\*\*Indoor gathering should also consider space. The maximum capacity for an indoor gathering should be based on the limits above OR 25% of the maximum capacity of the space, whichever is lower.

Mass gatherings are those planned or spontaneous events with a large number of people in attendance that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event, such as a concert, festival, conference, or sporting event. Evidence suggests that risk in outdoor environments seems to be lower than indoor environments. Events where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as sports requiring close contact, should be postponed at this time. Businesses that could become sites for mass gatherings should consider how they will support physical distancing by designing their environment, educating staff and reminding customers.

<sup>1</sup> Note: There is a slight discrepancy in the total numbers of cases reported by Harvard vs those reported by WI DHS. That is because some national data sources started grouping of probable and confirmed cases by county on September 4, 2020. DHS does not group probable and confirmed cases in their current metrics.



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2. Safe business practices. All Pierce County businesses should:
  - a. Have policies in place to monitor their staff for symptoms of COVID-19 or exposure to a known case on a regular basis.
  - b. Have policies that support working from home, when feasible.
  - c. Have policies and supplies that encourage handwashing, wearing masks, and physical distancing.
  - d. Have policies and supplies to ensure adequate disinfection and cleaning.
  - e. Cooperate with Public Health investigations related to COVID-19 confirmed or suspected cases related to the business operations, such as excluding employees based on public health recommendations as well as assisting public health with identifying and contacting case contacts.
  - f. Enforce mass gathering prohibitions on their premises.
  - g. Cease door-to-door operations.
  - h. Review and consider adopting the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation guidelines on [safe business practices](#).
  
3. Travel. Residents are strongly encouraged to avoid non-essential travel outside of their communities. Pierce County is still seeing travel-associated infections. If a Pierce County resident does travel outside their community and engages in activities that compromise physical distancing, they should limit contact with non-household members for 14 days and monitor symptoms. These types of activities include flying or traveling to crowded spaces.
  
4. Prevention of Disease Recommendations. All residents are strongly encouraged to follow these guidelines including:
  - a. Maintaining distancing of six (6) feet between people;
  - b. Wear a face covering when indoors or in an enclosed space, other than a private residence, when people who are not of the same household are present (see [Emergency Order 1](#));
  - c. Stay home if you are ill, even if your symptoms are mild, or if you believe you may have been exposed;
  - d. Practice proper hand hygiene;
  - e. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces.

Dated this 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 2020

AZ Snyder, MSc  
Health Officer



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