

North Office

3328 U.S. Hwy 51 N
Janesville, WI 53545-0772
Mailing Address:
PO Box 1088
Janesville, WI 53547-1088

608-757-5440
608-758-8423 (fax)



Public Health

www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth

South Office

61 Eclipse Center
Beloit, WI 53511

608-364-2010
608-364-2011 (fax)

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: Local Media

From: Katrina Harwood, Health Officer

Date: June 3, 2021

Rock County Public Health Department Discontinues Rock County Reopening Guidance

*Following successful vaccination effort and decreasing COVID-19 numbers,
Rock County to fully open effective Tuesday, June 8, 2021*

Rock County, WI – After a careful evaluation of current COVID-19 metrics, Rock County will discontinue its Rock County Reopening Plan, which included phased reopening requirements and other COVID-19 specific guidance, effective Tuesday, June 8, 2021. This means that as of Tuesday, all Rock County businesses may return to 100 percent occupancy and reopen fully. The Rock County Public Health Department will continue to update the COVID-19 Dashboard and metrics every two weeks, keeping a close watch on changing statistics and trends and adjusting accordingly.

The rationale for the discontinuation of the phased reopening plan comes after careful evaluation of regional COVID-19 statistics and trends.

First, the Rock County Health Department has recorded a significant decrease in local COVID-19 activity in recent months, with a drop in seven-day reporting figures from as many as 170 new cases daily from November 2020 through January 2021 to approximately 8 new cases per day over the most recent seven-day period. Rock County active case numbers have also dropped below 200 for the first time since mid-March.

Second, in addition to case numbers continuing to fall, Rock County has recorded significant decreases in hospitalization rates due to COVID-19. At the height of the pandemic, Rock County had as many as 70 patients hospitalized for COVID-19 care at one time; most recently, the number of patients hospitalized and getting treatment for COVID-19 at any one time varies from 8 to 15 patients.

Finally, Rock County vaccination rates have been steadily increasing since the vaccine was approved. “As we get more and more of our population vaccinated, we are seeing fewer cases of COVID-19, and those who are fully vaccinated are very

well protected against the virus. We have seen very few ‘break through’ cases and, among those, even fewer have been severe. The vaccine provides protection for those who are fully vaccinated, and we feel that as more people become vaccinated, disease rates will continue to drop,” said Rock County Public Health Department Epidemiologist Nick Zupan.

Despite the discontinued Reopening Plan, the Rock County Public Health Department reminds everyone that all unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear masks and practice social distancing to remain safe and within national CDC recommendations. Additionally, some privately owned businesses and certain industry sectors, including health care systems/medical facilities, schools, and public transportation, have ongoing mask requirements to protect the health and safety of their visitors, and everyone is encouraged to please follow these requests to protect the health of all of our community members.

All unvaccinated individuals are encouraged to get the vaccine, as vaccination is one of the best tools we have for overcoming COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and people who have been fully vaccinated are able to resume nearly all activities they did before COVID-19. Vaccines are widely accessible throughout the U.S. and in Rock County. Everyone ages 12 and older is recommended to get a COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccine providers in Rock County can be found at RockCountyShot.com or by calling 608-352-6727. Free rides to vaccine appointments can be scheduled by calling 211.

As was the case before, individuals exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should continue to get tested and take appropriate safety measures to ensure they do not pass along the infection to others. Individuals can learn more about what to look for and what is required after a positive test here: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/testing.htm.

For those seeking additional resources that provide guidance on COVID-19 related issues going forward, please visit: www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth, click on the Coronavirus link, and navigate to the Guidance and Resources section of the page. Resources are also available in English and Spanish on the Rock County Coronavirus Response and Recovery Hub located at co.rock.wi.us/c19hub.

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Rock County Public Health Department serves Rock County citizens by collaborating with partners to ensure a healthy, thriving Rock County. For the latest information about COVID-19 in Rock County, visit the Rock County Public Health Department website at www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth and follow us on social media @rockcountyphd. Local COVID-19 information is also available on the Rock County Coronavirus Response and Recovery Hub at www.co.rock.wi.us/c19hub.

Please send all media inquiries to Media.PublicHealth@co.rock.wi.us.