



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Tracy Kosbau

Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations

608-698-5853

## **Restaurants Re-Opening Safely**

Wisconsin restaurants have been waiting in anticipation for the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruling on the Governor's Safer at Home order. Now that the Safer at Home extension via Emergency Order 28 has been struck down, there are many questions that need to be answered. Can restaurants re-open? Should they re-open? What is the best way to re-open?

"The Wisconsin Restaurant Association cautions restaurant operators to carefully open if they feel it is right for their business and their community," said Kristine Hillmer, President & CEO of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. "Of paramount concern is the need to mitigate the risk of spread and build confidence in their customers."

The situation is still very fluid and things can change very quickly. Local health departments (counties and municipalities) can legally issue their own emergency order to continue Safer at Home provisions within their area. Restaurants need to keep an eye on what's going on in their county to ensure they are not in violation of local mandates, opening them up to fines and license revocation.

On the flip side, customers need to make decisions on what they think is best for them

depending upon their area of the state and personal situation. We ask that customers be patient and understanding as restaurants try to make decisions that are best for their business, their employees, their customers and their communities. This has been an extremely difficult situation for restaurant owners who sincerely want to do what's best for everyone involved.

"This has been an extremely difficult situation for restaurant owners who sincerely want to do what's best for everyone involved," said Hillmer. "That's why the WRA has developed the Wisconsin Promise program and other helpful resources."

### **The Wisconsin Restaurant Promise**

In partnership with the Wisconsin Restaurant Association and health officials across the State, restaurant owners and operators can make commitments to earn the Wisconsin Restaurant Promise endorsement during the COVID-19 recovery period. This document has also been synched with the guidelines put out by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC).

The Restaurant Promise asks restaurants to make the following commitments to protect their employees and customers:

- Continue to be a leader in food safety and sanitation practices where all of our team is trained in safe food handling practices and a Certified Food Protection Manager is scheduled for every shift.
- All staff will pass a health check or complete a health survey prior to each shift.
- All indoor and outdoor seating options will comply with the appropriate social distancing guidelines.
- Make hand sanitizer or hand washing stations available upon entry and exit.
- Clean and sanitize common areas regularly.
- Clean and sanitize all tables and chairs after every use.
- Place settings, utensils, menus, and condiments will either be single-use or will be cleaned and sanitized after every use.
- Post the Wisconsin Restaurant Promise at our entrances so everyone understands the steps we must all take to keep our communities safe.

"When customers see the Wisconsin Restaurant Promise endorsement, they can be certain that the restaurant is taking all necessary steps to protect their employees and customers and is

committed to playing a leadership role in protecting their communities,” according to Hillmer.

### **Additional Re-opening Resources**

The Wisconsin Restaurant Association has additional resources on their website to help restaurant operators navigate restaurant re-opening including:

- Re-opening checklist
  - Free food safety training
  - Guidance on glove and mask use
  - Research on consumer attitudes about post-pandemic dining
  - Social distancing reminder posters
  - Hand washing posters
  - Links to the WEDC Guidelines
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The Wisconsin Restaurant Association is one of the largest trade associations in the state with over 7,000 member locations throughout Wisconsin. The mission of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association is dedicated to the success of the Foodservice and Hospitality Industry. The Association advocates on behalf of the restaurant industry, provides a voice for the restaurant industry to consumers and the media and provides access to information and services to help members better run their businesses. WRA represents the entire foodservice industry which includes over 16,000 licensed food service establishments.

WRA membership includes a wide range of foodservice businesses representing virtually every size and style of restaurant in the state. Members include fine dining establishments, mom-and-pop supper clubs, small cafes, quick service restaurants, corporate chain restaurants, institutional food service operations, catering businesses and hotel and motel foodservice among others.

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