

For Immediate Release:

Thursday, July 30, 2020

Contact:

Peter Skopec, WISPIRG Director, peter@wispirg.org, (847) 687-7229

Josh Chetwynd, Communications Manager, jchetwynd@publicinterestnetwork.org, (303) 573-5558

**Statement: Mask mandate an important step, but state leaders should
create new stay-at-home order**

With COVID-19 surging, state leaders should shut down, start over and do it right

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers [announced](#) a statewide mask mandate on Thursday aimed at reining in the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Wisconsin. This statement comes as the state struggles to contain the [uncontrolled spread](#) of the virus in our state. More than 1,000 health professionals nationwide have now signed U.S. PIRG's [open letter](#) to America's decision-makers urging states to shut down, start over, and do it right this time.

WISPIRG Director Peter Skopec issued the following statement in response to the mask mandate:

"We applaud Gov. Evers for taking this necessary step to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Wisconsin — but it won't be enough. More decisive action is necessary. Gov. Evers, Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos must work together to put in place a new stay-at-home order, start over, and do it right this time.

"Although we slowed the virus down in the spring, we moved too quickly to reopen without hitting key benchmarks to be able to squash future outbreaks. And now we're facing the consequences. A [federal government report](#) puts Wisconsin in the 'red zone' for high COVID-19 activity.

"Telling the hard truths and making the hard calls now will save more lives later. More than 1,000 health professionals nationwide, including some of the foremost experts in the country, have now signed our [open letter](#) to America's decision-makers urging a new shut-down.

"Wisconsin's leaders should close non-essential businesses. People should stay home until the percentage of COVID-19 tests coming back positive is at 2 percent or lower on average statewide. Health experts agree that's [low enough](#) that they'd feel confident the current outbreak is under control.

"However, even when the positivity rate hits 2 percent or lower, the state should not start reopening again unless we meet additional important criteria laid out by health experts. This includes [greater daily testing capacity](#); a [workforce of contact tracers](#) large enough to trace all current cases; and enough personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep essential workers safe."

The Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group (WISPIRG) is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy organization that stands up to powerful interests whenever they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to fully participate in democratic society. Learn more at www.wispirg.org.