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Public Health Groups Oppose Assembly Republican Restrictions on Local Health Officers

(Kimberly, WI) – January 7, 2021 – The Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards (WALHDAB), in partnership with the Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA), opposes the Republican-led effort to limit local public health orders to two-business days. WALHDAB and WPHA are extremely disappointed Assembly Republicans set aside science to politicize the pandemic.

Local health officers do not need micromanagement from Madison, they need resources to continue implementing local strategies to fight the pandemic. Following the Wisconsin Supreme Court’s ruling in *Legislature v Palm*, Republican legislative leaders publicly expressed their support for local health officers and stated they want a continuing pandemic response to be conducted on a local level.

This policy neither supports local health officers nor provides them the tools necessary to adequately continue a local response. It is fundamentally anti-science and anti-local control.

“The reality is our local health officers have worked closely within their local units of government and with their locally elected officials to determine the best course of action necessary to protect their communities,” said Robin Lankton, President of WPHA.

These decisions are evidence-based and made in real-time. In addition, there has been an extraordinary emphasis on community outreach and education to help support voluntary compliance with recommended best practices. As a result, the number of orders that have been issued by local health officers have been limited in quantity, supported by locally elected officials, and supported by the majority of the public.

The middle of a pandemic is no time to limit the work of local health officers. We need the legislature to support local health officers and remain committed to the local decision-making as the keys to governance in Wisconsin.

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