



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HEALTH DEPARTMENTS ISSUE ORDERS REGARDING LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES

March 23, 2020 – With confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Wisconsin long-term care (LTC) facilities as well as LTC facilities in other states, the health officers of Racine County issued two orders today to protect LTC residents. These orders are in line with CDC guidance which identifies LTC facilities at high risk for untoward consequences of COVID-19 due to the vulnerable nature of the residents and the risks associated with congregate settings. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) note that all nursing homes should assume COVID-19 is in their community, including communities where it is not yet reported.

Dottie-Kay Bowersox, City of Racine Public Health Administrator, and Margaret Gesner, Central Racine County Health Department Health Officer, said that “protection of our most vulnerable is vital in the response to COVID-19.” They noted that their agencies, as well as the Racine County Emergency Operations Center, are actively working to support the LTC facilities in Racine County.

The first order requires ALL long-term care facilities to lock down immediately which includes nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and memory care facilities. Many facilities have done this already. The order provides actions to take on visitor restrictions, healthcare personnel infection prevention strategies, resident monitoring and restrictions, general infection control, managing personal protection equipment (PPE) and supply shortages, reporting to the health department, and requires documentation of residents who leave the facility for any reason.

The second order requires that until further notice, ALL first responders and emergency medical services personnel shall be required to wear personal protective equipment when responding to all health emergency calls including those requesting assistance at long-term care facilities, and nursing homes. Personal protective equipment at a minimum shall include face masks, goggles, and gloves. While first responders are currently equipped, Racine County and the Racine County EOC are actively seeking and acquiring more personal protection equipment to ensure those working on the front lines are protected in the long term. Details on donations will be forthcoming.

More information is available on the health departments' websites: Central Racine County Health Department (www.crchd.com/covid19), City of Racine Public Health Department (www.cityofracine.org/Health) or by calling Central Racine County Health Department at 262-898-4460 or City of Racine Public Health Department at 262-636-9201.

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