



**Re:** COVID-19 UPDATE MEMO  
**Date:** Monday, July 27 – Sunday, August 2, 2020 6 pm CT

This memo is a daily synthesis of critical information and trends about the pandemic that are relevant to the Milwaukee Jewish Federation's work of caring for the needs of the Jewish people. While the information is intended for use by MJF leadership, we are also sharing it with other community leaders. If you have questions, please contact Anna Goldstein at [AnnaG@MilwaukeeJewish.org](mailto:AnnaG@MilwaukeeJewish.org) or 414-390-5733.

## Global

- According to the Johns Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center as of Sunday, August 2 at 6 pm CT there are 17,960,538 confirmed cases and 687,030 deaths worldwide.<sup>1</sup> The United States leads in number of cases and deaths, followed by Brazil in both categories.
- [The threat of neo-Nazi infiltration of Germany's state institutions is more extensive than officials realized.](#) Now they're struggling to uproot such infiltration. Last month, the government disbanded an entire company of the nation's special forces that had been infiltrated by extremists. A group called Nordkreuz, or Northern Cross, shows that the problem of far-right infiltration has penetrated multiple layers of German society over the years as the authorities underestimated the threat or were reluctant to confront it. Nordkreuz members plotted to round up and kill political enemies and those defending migrants and refugees before they were uncovered by the authorities three years ago.

## National

- According to the Johns Hopkins University & Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center, as of Sunday, August 2 at 6 pm CT there are 4,662,860 confirmed cases and 154,793 deaths in the United States.<sup>2</sup> The seven-day average for new coronavirus-related deaths [rose in nearly half of states over the past week](#), pushing the national death toll past 150,000 and prompting health experts to warn that the trend was unlikely to reverse anytime soon. Numerous states reported daily fatalities in recent days, including California and Florida. Nationwide, the daily coronavirus death toll exceeded 1,000 for the sixth day in a row on Saturday. [The U.S. recorded more than 1.9 million new infections in July](#), nearly 42% of the more than 4.5 million cases reported nationwide since the pandemic began and more than double the number documented in any other month.
- Deborah Birx, the physician overseeing the White House coronavirus response, [warned today](#) that the United States has entered a "new phase" of the pandemic and urged people to take extreme health precautions as infections and deaths rise sharply throughout the country. Birx did not rule out an estimate from former Food and Drug

<sup>1</sup> <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb that virus deaths could top 300,000 by the end of the year, saying “anything is possible.” Birx also said such an outcome would be far less likely if people practiced social distancing and avoided large gatherings. Birx and Anthony S. Fauci, the nation’s top infectious-disease expert, have warned 20 states in the Sun Belt, the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest that the virus spread is accelerating within their borders. White Birx said mitigation efforts have helped in some places, she stressed that people need to practice social distancing and wear masks. Birx also raised concerns about the virus spreading within multigenerational households, urging people in those settings to “really consider” wearing masks inside their homes. With the new academic year starting soon in many communities, Birx also suggested that schools avoid in-person instruction in places where infections are rising – a departure from recent demands by President Donald Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos that schools fully reopen in the fall.

- [At least four schools in Indiana and Mississippi reported](#) that a student tested positive for the coronavirus during the first few days school was back in session. The districts reportedly instructed people who had been in contact with the infected individuals to self-quarantine. In most of the country, [schools that reopen classrooms will quickly face the question of what to do when students test positive](#). To deal with that likelihood, many schools and some states have enacted contact tracing and quarantine protocols, with different thresholds at which they would close classrooms or buildings.
- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin [made clear in separate interviews today](#) that they remain far apart on a deal for a new economic relief package. Pelosi and Mnuchin plan to meet again on Monday but pointed to multiple areas of disagreement that suggest consensus remains elusive.
- [Tropical Storm Isaias is skirting along Florida’s east coast](#) and, through Sunday night, will unleash scattered areas of strong winds, heavy rain, and along the short, rough surf. It is set to charge up to the Entire Coast, crashing ashore in the Carolinas Monday night, before surging up the rest of the Eastern Seaboard from Virginia to Maine, exiting late Wednesday. Heavy rains are predicted to drench large areas of the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic, as well as New England. [The tropical storm is expected to be upgraded to a hurricane](#) again after a downgrade late Saturday. [Emergency management officials have drawn up new and special plans](#) to deal with people who are fleeing or have been displaced by storms.

## State

- According to Wisconsin DHS as of Sunday, August at 2 pm CT there are 54,924 (+922 from prior day) confirmed cases, 4,717 (+26 from prior day) hospitalizations and 948 (+1 from prior day) deaths in the state.<sup>3</sup> There are currently 9,994 active cases. The state is at an 8.6% hospitalization rate and a 1.7% fatality rate. 904,666 negative test results have been recorded. Saturday’s cases are [the second-highest number reported in the last two weeks](#), following 1,117 positive cases on July 21. [New coronavirus cases are](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/data.htm>

[picking up](#) at a dangerous pace in much of the Midwest and in areas that had seen apparent progress. Follow the most up to date state data and trends with dashboards from the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#) and the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#).

- Less than 24 hours after Governor Tony Evers announced a statewide mask order for Wisconsin, [Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald has signaled](#) that Senate Republicans have the votes to begin the process of striking it down. Fitzgerald did not indicate when the Senate might take up the matter. State law gives the Legislature the power to revoke a governor's emergency order at any time. Reversing the mask order and the public health emergency could have other far-reaching consequences. According to the governor's office, the National Guard would likely not be able to assist at the polls during the Tuesday, August 11 primary if the Legislature or a court were to rescind the public health emergency, because a public health emergency is one of the only justifications a governor can use to call the National Guard into active duty. The assistance of the National Guard was crucial to keeping polling sites operating during the statewide presidential primary and Supreme Court election in April. The governor's office said nearly 1,000 National Guard members may be needed to assist in the statewide August 11 primary. Likely the only other way for the National Guard to assist at the polls under Wisconsin law is for the thousands of municipalities across the state to request assistance from the National Guard themselves. Using the National Guard at community testing sites for COVID-19 across the state could also be placed in jeopardy. National Guard members are under separate federal orders to assist with testing and other COVID-19 response efforts.
- The Verona Area School District is [test driving what in-person school could look like](#) as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. About 100 students attended a week-long summer school program this week, with another group set for other classes next week. The two weeks will serve as an important example as the district and others in the area consider at least some in-person school this fall. The Verona School board voted on July 27 to offer in-person learning for students in kindergarten through second grade beginning on Tuesday, September 8, while the rest of its students will attend virtually. The in-person program, which followed a broader virtual summer school offering earlier in the summer, is housed at Country View Elementary School. It features masks, desks set far apart, small classes limited to seven to 15 students per class and outdoor arrival and dismissal routines that keep students at a distance from each other. Students begin the day at 8:30 am and are picked up at 11 am. Among the health restrictions is a no-visitor policy.
- [Noah's Ark Waterpark closed until further notice](#) on Saturday after two employees tested positive for the virus. The popular Wisconsin Dells attraction announced the decision on its [website](#) and said it will be working closely with the Sauk County Health Department and other experts on how to move forward. It is not immediately clear where the Noah's Ark employees contracted the coronavirus. The CDC has said there is no evidence that COVID-19 can spread to people through the water in a pool and that proper operation and disinfection of pools should kill the virus that causes COVID-19. The company said it has implemented extensive safety precautions for employees and patrons, including temperature checks, requiring face coverings, increased cleaning and disinfection protocols, limiting attendance and promoting social distancing. It said the park will

undergo a thorough cleaning and sanitation on Saturday, and that additional information will be posted as soon as possible. The Wisconsin Dells and other areas of the state with higher shares of jobs tied to the tourism industry have been hit hard economically by the coronavirus pandemic.

- The Milwaukee Brewers' [entire weekend series was postponed](#) following positive COVID-19 tests among the St. Louis Cardinals traveling party – including three players and three staff members.

## Local

- According to Wisconsin DHS as of Sunday, August 2 at 2 pm CT there are 19,727 confirmed cases and 446 deaths in Milwaukee County.<sup>4</sup> 173,362 negative tests have been performed in Milwaukee County. There are 568 confirmed cases and 17 deaths in Ozaukee County, and 3,663 confirmed cases and 55 deaths in Waukesha county. Follow the most up to date local data and trends with the [North Shore Health Department](#), [Milwaukee County Health Department](#), and [Washington and Ozaukee County Health Departments'](#) dashboards.
- More than 400 small businesses including restaurants, bars and retailers will share more than \$3 million in funds the city of Milwaukee received through a federal stimulus program. [Scroll through a table from the Milwaukee Business Journal](#) to see which businesses were approved for grants. Click on the column headers to sort by business name. Approved expenses include the cost of procuring personal protective equipment for staff, investing in modifications of business spaces and operations to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and restocking perishable inventory. Data from the city show restart grants approved as of July 29 ranged from \$100 to the maximum of \$15,000. The figures show 19 businesses obtained grants of the maximum value. More than 40% of the applicants identified themselves as minority-owned businesses, and more than 40% said they are women-owned.
- [More than 100 protestors marched through Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's neighborhood on Saturday](#) demanding a moratorium on evictions and other forms of housing protections. With the coronavirus pandemic putting people out of work and Governor Tony Evers' statewide ban on evictions now two months expired, between 150 and 170 people are being evicted from their homes in Milwaukee every week, according to the Milwaukee Autonomous Tenants Union, which advocates for tenant rights and organized Saturday's march. The state (\$25 million), Milwaukee County (\$10 million) and City of Milwaukee (\$15 million) have poured millions into rental assistance programs, but advocates say vulnerable tenants need added protections. Marchers snaked through the streets of Washington Heights on Saturday evening, arriving outside the mayor's house, where they paused for several speeches and demanded more from local leaders. Barrett said the housing crisis is a "major concern" of his, but that state law preempts local governments from imposing much regulation on landlords. Barrett said he would support a moratorium on evictions, but he doesn't have the power to make

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/county.htm>

one. After Evers' statewide moratorium on evictions ended on May 26, Milwaukee saw an increased number of evictions. [In June, Milwaukee County landlords filed nearly 1,500 evictions](#), an increase of 26% compared to June 2019. Protestors called for a range of tenant protections, including forbidding landlords from accumulating late payment fees, scrubbing all evictions from tenants' records during the pandemic and instituting a robust mediation process separate from circuit court that provides free legal representation. During a virtual press conference on Thursday, Barrett announced the city will allocate another \$5 million in federal funds into rental assistance, totaling \$15 million. He said that could help about 3,000 families stay in their homes.

## Projections

- [Early research from a UW-Madison professor](#) suggests Dane County Sheriff's Office efforts to reduce the jail population amid the coronavirus pandemic was critical to flattening the curve of infection. As cases of COVID-19 began to spread in the community, the sheriff's office reduced the jail population with methods such as releasing inmates on GPS monitoring. Other agencies – the district's attorney's office, circuit court system, public defender's office, Madison Police Department and Wisconsin Department of Corrections – involved with the criminal justice system altered their practices in response to the pandemic. A reduced population allowed jail staff to create space in the housing units with the goal of minimizing the infection rate.
- [A new report about a coronavirus outbreak at a sleep-away camp](#) in Georgia provides fresh reason for concern. Of the 600 campers and staff members, nearly half became infected within a week of orientation. The camp took precautions but did not require campers to wear masks. Singing and cheering may have helped spread the virus.
- Riding the New York City subway may be safer than you think. In countries where the coronavirus pandemic has ebbed, ridership has rebounded – [and there have been no notable superspreader events linked to mass transit](#), although ridership in major cities is still well below pre-pandemic levels. If the risks of mass transit can be addressed, that could have sweeping implications for many large American cities, particularly New York, where one of the biggest challenges in recovery will be coaxing riders back onto public transportation.