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**WISCONSIN HEALTH LEADERS PETITION SUPREME COURT IN SUPPORT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS**  
*They ask the court to dismiss GOP legislative leaders' petition in effort to protect public health*

**[KIMBERLY, WI, April 30, 2020 –]** The Wisconsin Public Health Association (WPHA) continued its support for public health efforts by the filing of a “Safer Together” amicus brief on April 29. The brief asks the Wisconsin Supreme Court to dismiss a legislative petition to rely on Wisconsin’s Emergency Rulemaking Process, and urges the court to leave in place the Governor’s and Secretary of Health’s orders to stay home.

On April 21, 2020, Legislative Republicans asked the Court to block Safer at Home without offering any alternative plan to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governor Tony Evers announced Wednesday dozens of organizations voicing support for the extension of Safer at Home in briefs filed with the Wisconsin Supreme Court, WPHA being amongst them.

Read [Governor Evers' full press release here](#).

According to Governor Evers’ April 29<sup>th</sup> press release, “Wisconsin Public Health Association, Wisconsin Nurses Association, Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Wisconsin Association for Perinatal Care, My Choice Family Care – Care Wisconsin, and more than 50 doctors, nurses, pathologists, professors, and public health experts from around Wisconsin filed an amicus brief demonstrating the deadly nature of COVID-19 and the need for prompt, executive action to combat pandemics. Available [here](#).”

“The human and economic toll of failing to adequately manage outbreak response and recovery could be even more damaging than what we’ve already seen. The Court must continue to allow public health experts to lead the way,” said David Pluymers, WPHA President.

GOP leaders want to rely on Wisconsin’s Emergency Rulemaking Process that requires least 20 days for decision-making. Public health experts say it’s a dangerous approach to respond to a highly contagious virus that can spread from people not showing symptoms and requires rapid responses to rapidly changing situations.

According to an example in the brief submitted to the Court, on April 6, Brown County had 39 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Twenty days later, on April 26, they had 776 cases.

The brief submitted to the Court explains how crowded places – factories like Brown County’s meat-packing plants, but also schools, nursing homes, dormitories, homeless shelters, prisons, and residential care facilities – are places this virus can easily spread.



“This disease’s specific characteristics—high contagiousness and asymptomatic spread—make it possible for COVID-19 to spike in areas that have been relatively quiet, including rural areas,” said Dr. Geoffrey R. Swain, MD, MPH, representative on the WPHA Public Affairs Committee.

“Prior to Wisconsin’s Safer at Home Order, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases was doubling every 3 days. After Safer at Home, the doubling time is now about 13 days,” Swain added.

Swain went on to point out that the doubling time of the virus does not depend on how much virus is present in any location. “The doubling time of this virus depends on only one thing,” Swain said, “the degree of physical mixing between people.”

The brief echoes several measures needed to lift Safer at Home, covered in Governor Evers’ recent Badger Bounce Back Plan: continued physical distancing to limit new infections, expanded public health testing and contact tracing capacity, and assurance that healthcare systems have the capacity to manage the increased number of cases that will inevitably result from increased physical mixing.

“20 days may represent a quick government response under normal circumstances, but it’s not fast enough for fighting this very contagious and quickly changing pandemic,” said Darcie Warren, representative on the WPHA Public Affairs Committee.

Protecting public health during a pandemic requires nimble government action responsive to rapidly changing facts, the brief says.

“The emergency rulemaking process serves Wisconsin well in many areas, but not this one,” added Warren.

Wisconsin Public Health Association represents over 100 organizations and over 500 public health professionals in communities across Wisconsin, striving towards building a healthier, safer Wisconsin through policy and partnership.

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