



University Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

UW System testing program includes more than 350,000 tests

MADISON, Wis.—The University of Wisconsin System will employ a robust COVID-19 testing regimen during the fall 2020 semester, thanks to an allocation of approximately \$32 million from the office of Gov. Tony Evers. The funding, originally delivered from the federal CARES Act, includes nearly \$18 million for testing more than 350,000 students and \$6 million for personal protective equipment associated with testing.

“Funding from the governor’s office and the federal government will help us provide the kind of testing we need at our universities when students return this fall,” said UW System President Tommy Thompson. “Students and families can be confident in this testing program.”

The testing program is another step being taken by the UW System to mitigate risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. The UW System Board of Regents has previously required that students, faculty, and staff will be required to wear facemasks in classrooms, residence halls, and other buildings.

The funding announced today enables the UW System to implement strong testing measures.

Excluding UW-Madison, it will allow for:

- Testing of up to 34,000 students who show COVID-19 symptoms, similar to tests now being administered in medical and community settings. Approximately 28,000 tests will be distributed to universities and about 6,000 will be held in reserve by the UW System for future allocation.
- An additional 317,000 tests for students living in residence halls, given every two weeks with a rapid turnaround of results, and for close contacts of symptomatic students.
- Optional flu testing.
- Up to 52 staff located at the universities to assist with testing.

UW-Madison has already announced a testing plan, with \$8 million allocated by the governor’s office. The plan announced today applies to the other 12 UW System universities.

Under the plan, testing would be conducted by university student health services offices and local health partners. Those local partners continue to be identified.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s leading infectious disease expert, said this week that universities can welcome students back on campus so long as sufficient safety protocols and testing are in place.

“We have been following the guidance offered by my friend Dr. Fauci and other experts and believe we are on track for on-campus instruction,” Thompson said. “Our mask-wearing requirement will help prevent the spread of the virus while our testing program will help identify cases and help contain them.”

Thompson said universities are also working closely with their local public health departments to monitor trends in their communities and to discuss contact tracing. And he said the UW System continues to develop a case dashboard for public reporting of cases within the System.

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The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 170,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. Nearly 90 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System universities also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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