

## Recent UW-River Falls grad joins Pierce County Public Health as contact tracer

August 13, 2020 - Recent University of Wisconsin-River Falls graduate Hallie Kaczmarski has joined Pierce County Public Health as a COVID-19 contact tracer.

Kaczmarski, originally from New Richmond, graduated in May from UW-River Falls with a degree in exercise and sport science/sport management. She is able to translate much of the knowledge and skills she learned while studying science, health, and well-being toward advancing her career in public health.

“Although my degree is more sport-related, I have wanted to work in public health since my sophomore year of college,” said Kaczmarski. “Contact tracing is a great way to enter the world of public health.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, contact tracing is a key strategy in the absence of a vaccine. Contact tracers reach out to people who may have been exposed to the virus to make sure they know about the exposure and what to do if they develop symptoms.

Describing a typical workday, Kaczmarski said, “My job is never the same, which is something that I enjoy about it. I have a list of close contacts that I call throughout their quarantine process to check in and make sure things are going well. It is important for me to stay organized and keep track of all symptoms, along with release dates for each person.”

Joining the Pierce County Public Health team during a pandemic has been both exciting and challenging, according to Kaczmarski. As cases of COVID-19 started climbing in mid-July, Kaczmarski was quickly oriented into her position and given a list of contacts to begin contact tracing. An increase of cases just before the start of the school year is concerning, and public health is relying on students, faculty, and staff to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 this fall. Staying home when you are sick, even if you only have minor symptoms, protects the entire community.

After seeing the impact on public health when there are outbreaks and increased COVID-19 activity within the community, Kaczmarski urges her fellow Falcons to be mindful of the activities they participate in during this pandemic.

“I hope to see everyone working together this fall to help reduce cases,” she said.

For more information about UWRf’s preparations to welcome students back to campus, visit <https://www.uwrf.edu/Falcons-Forward/Index.cfm>

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Photo attached.