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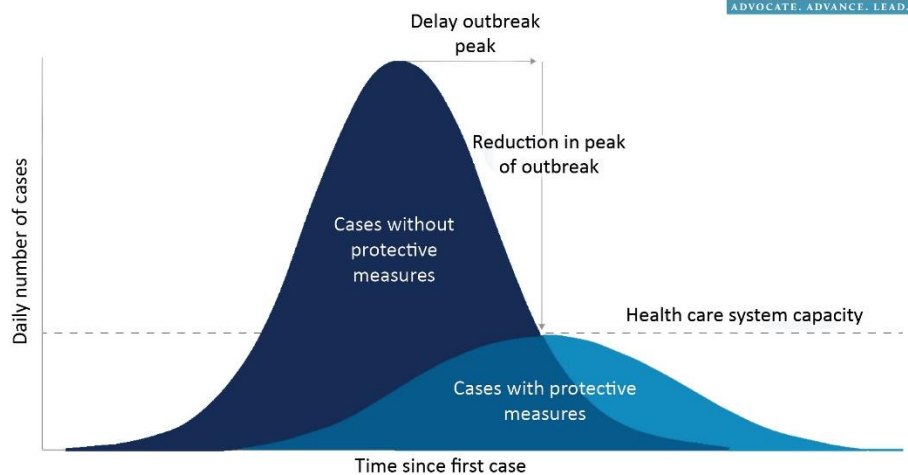
WHA Calls on Public: “Help Us Be There for You” During Pandemic

Today the Wisconsin Hospital Association – with hospital and health system members throughout the state – is asking the public to help health care in its efforts to prepare for a possible surge of COVID-19 patients. Wisconsin citizens can best help themselves, their neighbors and their health care workers by seriously embracing recent government orders and recommendations aimed at reducing social contact. Adhering to these orders and recommendations can slow the virus and flatten the curve of its spread, preventing the health system from becoming overwhelmed and allowing health care workers to utilize precious resources to care for those most in need.

WHA’s call echoes today’s [statement](#) from Governor Tony Evers, who stressed that people should stay home as much as possible. This is for two reasons: tested and untested patients, whether having symptoms or not, can spread this virus to others, and only those who are the most seriously ill should be tested for possible COVID-19 exposure at this time.

“We have to slow the trend of spread so that our health care system does not become overwhelmed and our incredibly dedicated health care professionals, who are on the front lines, are protected and are there for those who need them,” WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding said. “That’s why we reiterate the message from Governor Evers today. We want to make sure the public knows how they can help and why certain unprecedented steps are now being taken.”

Flattening the Curve



What’s Happening Now in Hospitals and Health Systems and Why It’s Important

- **Promoting Social Distancing:** The public has likely noticed that hospitals and health systems are making special efforts to foster better “social distancing” to help fight against further community spread of the virus. Perhaps most importantly this includes patients staying home if their symptoms are manageable and calling their health care provider first before making an in-person visit to a health care facility. Hospitals and health systems are also doing their part to promote social distancing by limiting visitors and restricting travel for employees.

- *COVID-19 Testing:* There is a national shortage of COVID-19 test kits and the materials that enable the tests to be processed. Medical providers have recently stopped offering “drive-thru” COVID-19 testing due to the shortage. Until those shortages can be resolved and testing capabilities increased, people should not leave their houses in search of a test unless advised to do so by a health care professional. The state’s Department of Health Services recently issued an “urgent update” [bulletin](#) for health care providers, directing them to limit testing at this time to severely ill patients and health care workers with specific symptoms.
- *Delaying Scheduled Procedures and Appointments:* In order to ensure that capacity is available for patients who may need care and to help avoid further spread of COVID-19, many hospitals are postponing elective surgeries and procedures that can be safely delayed. By postponing certain procedures and appointments, hospitals and clinics can minimize potential COVID-19 infection and preserve personal protective equipment such as face masks that health care workers will need to care for a potential influx of patients seriously ill with COVID-19.

“I know these are very difficult times for everyone, but the sooner we get through this the better, and that’s why we’re asking people to take these critical precautions,” Borgerding said.

- 30 -