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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3/18/2020

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COVID-19 Update: Gov. Evers Orders Scaling Down of all Child Care Settings

Gov. Tony Evers today directed Department of Health Services (DHS) Secretary-designee Andrea Palm to restrict the size of all child care settings. Centers may not operate with more than 10 staff present at a time and may not operate with more than 50 children present at a time. This order can be found here:

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/WIGOV/2020/03/18/file_attachments/1404852/DHS%20Order_3.18.2020.pdf

The restriction in size goes into effect at 8 a.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2020 to give child care providers and families time to make plans for care moving forward. The closure will remain in effect for the duration of the public health emergency declared by [Executive Order #72](#).

“Child care is an essential service for many of the folks working on the front lines to provide healthcare and vital services to our communities during the COVID-19 outbreak,” said Gov. Evers. “This is another step forward to ensure that service continues, while protecting our child care providers who are going above and beyond their regular duties to support our families, communities, and state.”

Providers are being asked to prioritize families of healthcare and essential service providers, using good faith to determine who those families are. Those using care who can keep their children at home are being asked to do so. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and DHS have updated guidance for providers to implement this emergency order.

“I know many Wisconsinites are looking for ways to help during this crisis,” Gov. Evers continued. “If you are able, keeping your kids at home is one of the actions you can take to have the most impact. I also want to recognize the child care providers around the state who are stepping up to support our communities-- we appreciate your service during this challenging time.”

Additionally, the Administration is working with healthcare providers, child care providers, and the National Guard to explore options to serve healthcare workers through on-site care. It is important that these facilities are able to provide the same level of care and health precautions for staff and children. More information on this effort will be available in the coming days.

“We in Forest County can rally together. If you have capacity to care for kids whose parents are on the front line of COVID-19 response, especially health care providers,



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please consider helping your neighbors during this difficult time,” said Jacee Shepard, Forest County Health Officer.

People should follow simple steps to prevent illness and avoid exposure to this virus including:

- Avoid social gatherings with people of all ages (including playdates and sleepovers, parties, large family dinners, visitors in your home, non-essential workers in your house);
- Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Avoiding touching your face; and
- Staying home when sick.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and we encourage you and frequently monitor the DHS website <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>, the Forest County Health Department Facebook page, and additional information can be found on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

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