Public Information Statement

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GRANT COUNTY, WI COVID-19 UPDATE #12

Eight Confirmed Cases and Three Probable Cases of COVID-19 Identified Throughout Grant County

Grant County, WI- As of this morning, April 13, 2020, the Grant County Health Department has identified eight confirmed cases and three probable cases of COVID-19. Four of the previously identified cases have recovered so far. Additionally, over 110 contacts of confirmed and probable cases have been identified in Grant County and have been notified of their potential exposure.

Many additional contacts of the confirmed cases were referred to other jurisdictions because they were not Grant County residents. Some of the local contacts of the cases have since tested positive or developed symptoms and are part of the confirmed and probable case totals. Jeff Kindrai, Director/Health Officer with the Grant County Health Department, has concerns that the number of close contacts identified is so large. "We really need people to do their part and stay home and limit the number of people they have close contact with whether they feel sick or not," Kindrai said.

The actual number of COVID-19 cases in Grant County is estimated to be much higher than the number of identified confirmed and probable cases, according to Kindrai. This is due in part to the high percentage of people who are infected with COVID-19 that show no symptoms but are spreading it. This is also due to an improved but limited supply of testing kits and supplies available across the state and nation. As a result, many individuals with mild- to-moderate symptoms are not being tested and are asked to remain at home until their symptoms are improved.

Grant County Health Officer, Kindrai, reports that while some of the cases in Grant County are likely linked, the geographic locations of the identified cases show that COVID 19 is present throughout the County. "If we captured all of the information on individuals who are infected but without symptoms, and those with mild or moderate

symptoms that are not tested or reported, our number of cases of COVID-19 would be much higher," says Kindrai. Kindrai adds, "If everyone with mild symptoms went in for testing, we would end up exposing many more people and our case counts would climb even higher." Further, he adds, "Our testing capacity would also be quickly overwhelmed, as would our limited supply of personal protective equipment, and we likely would see more sick health care workers, at a time when we need them most for those who will become seriously ill."   Hospitalization rates for COVID-19 are currently around 29% in Wisconsin.

To help avoid becoming ill, the health department reminds people to:

- Avoid social gatherings with people of all ages (including playdates, sleep-overs, parties, large family dinners, group camping, visitors in your home, and non-essential workers in your house);

- Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water;

- Covering coughs and sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not the hands);

- Regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces;

- Not shaking hands;

- Avoiding touching your face; and

- Staying home.

The public is encouraged to frequently visit the DHS website for updates, and to follow @DHSWI on Facebook and Twitter, dhs.wi on Instagram, and the Grant County Health Department at www.co.grant.wi.gov Additional information can be found on the CDC website.

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