

# Social Distancing and Cancer Patients



Information for local governments, businesses, and organizations

## Introduction

The Wisconsin Supreme Court recently overturned the statewide “Safer at Home” order. As a result, cities, counties, and businesses are now responsible for creating their own policies to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19.

The Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative calls upon all communities to protect cancer patients from COVID-19. This resource can help local governments, businesses, and organizations consider the health and safety of cancer patients as they decide how to move forward.

## Cancer Patients and COVID-19

Almost 300,000 people in Wisconsin are living with a cancer diagnosis. People with cancer often have weakened immune systems because of cancer and its treatment. When cancer patients are exposed to viruses, they are at greater risk of severe complications.

Emerging research shows COVID-19 is especially dangerous for cancer patients. People in active treatment for cancer are more likely to contract COVID-19 and need intensive care and ventilators than people without cancer. And patients with certain cancers are nearly three times more likely to die from COVID-19 than the general population.

## You Can Help

Policies that encourage residents to stay safe at home and practice social distancing are proven to slow the spread of the coronavirus. These policies reduce the risk of serious illness and death for cancer patients and survivors.

Even if a person feels well and does not have symptoms of COVID-19, they still may be contagious.

This puts cancer patients in great danger.

### What you can do:

- **Implement social distancing strategies** to maintain physical distance between people and limit the number of people gathered at once.
- **Require masks** in businesses, government offices, and other spaces open to the public.
- **Promote other public health practices** proven to limit the spread of germs, such as frequent and thorough hand washing, and the regular disinfecting of commonly touched surfaces.
- **Raise awareness** about COVID-19 and cancer patients with the **social media tools** available at [www.wicancer.org/resources/covid19](http://www.wicancer.org/resources/covid19)

## Learn More

The Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative is monitoring recommendations from national organizations regarding the health and safety of cancer patients, as well as guidance on moving forward with cancer prevention vaccinations and cancer screening services. We will share more information as it becomes available.

To learn more about cancer and COVID-19, visit [www.wicancer.org/resources/covid19](http://www.wicancer.org/resources/covid19)

**Cancer does not stop during a pandemic. Social distancing saves lives.**