

# COVID-19 Policies and Cancer Patients



Information for local governments, businesses, and organizations

## Introduction

*Chances are, you know someone with cancer.* As a local government official, business owner, or civic leader, you play a critical role in protecting cancer patients from COVID-19 by limiting the spread of the novel coronavirus. This resource can help you learn more.

## 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 that COVID-19 is especially dangerous for cancer patients. People in active treatment for cancer are more likely to get COVID-19, more likely to need intensive care, and more likely to require ventilators than people without cancer. 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. Policies that *require masks* in public settings and when around people from different households can prevent the spread of COVID-19.

*These policies reduce the risk of serious illness and death for cancer patients and survivors.*

A person who feels healthy and does not have symptoms of COVID-19 still may be contagious. This puts cancer patients in great danger.

## 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 during the pandemic. We will share more information as it becomes available.

### What you can do:

- **Require and enforce mask policies** in businesses, government offices, and other spaces outside of the home.
- **Implement social distancing strategies** that maintain physical distance between people and limit the number of people gathered in one place at the same time.
- **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 about cancer and COVID-19:  
[www.wicancer.org/resources/covid19](http://www.wicancer.org/resources/covid19)