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Town and Village of Waterford, Town and City of Burlington)*

(City of Racine, Elmwood Park and Wind Point)

For Immediate Release

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS RECOMMEND LIMITING GATHERINGS OF MORE THAN 50 PEOPLE

Racine County local health departments and government agencies continue to respond to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) pandemic. To date, there has been one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Racine County. Many prevention and mitigation strategies have been implemented, including social distancing measures. Most recently the two local health departments recommended limiting gatherings of >250 people. Last evening the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended “that for the next 8 weeks, organizers (whether groups or individuals) cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the United States. Events of any size should only be continued if they can be carried out with adherence to guidelines for protecting vulnerable populations, hand hygiene, and social distancing. This recommendation does not apply to the day to day operation of organizations such as schools, institutes of higher learning, or businesses.”

Today, the Central Racine County Health Department Health Officer, Margaret Gesner, and City of Racine Public Health Department Administrator, Dottie-Kay Bowersox, immediately recommended a moratorium on mass gatherings of 50 people or more in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Racine County. A mass gathering is defined as any event or convening that brings together or is likely to bring together fifty (50) or more people in a single room or single confined or enclosed space at the same time, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, conference room, meeting hall, theater, exhibition center, museum, places of worship and religious gathering centers, and any other space where people are present and they are within arm’s length of one another for more than ten (10) minutes. **These recommendations can change at any time and become more restrictive.**

These recommendations are being put in place because, although most people who contract COVID-19 do not become seriously ill, people with mild symptoms and asymptomatic people with COVID-19 may place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk. These recommendations will reduce the likelihood that many people will be exposed to COVID-19 at a single event and will thereby slow the spread of COVID-19 within Racine County. By reducing the spread of COVID-19, this recommendation will help preserve critical and limited healthcare capacity.

Employers are asked to implement the following strategies:

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home
- Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees
- Perform enhanced environmental cleaning
- Establish policies, such as flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees

The general public is advised to continue to practice healthy habits, including avoiding close contact with people who are sick and staying home when you are sick. If it is not an emergency and you get sick, call your healthcare provider before seeking care.