FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 5, 2020

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Free COVID-19 Testing in Portage County with National Guard Assistance

In an effort to increase local testing capacity for COVID-19, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services in conjunction with local health departments are providing an opportunity for free drive thru community test sites throughout the state. National Guard troops are assisting local health departments in setting up drive-through testing sites for Wisconsin residents to receive a COVID-19 nasal swab test.

Portage County Health and Human Services is hosting a National Guard assisted community-wide COVID-19 testing event. Drive-up testing will be available at Portage County Health and Human Services, in the back parking lot, at 817 Whiting Avenue in Stevens Point on Monday, May 11 and Tuesday, May 12 from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm. No appointment is needed, and testing will be done free of charge. Anyone 5 years and older with at least one of the following symptoms will qualify for testing: fever, cough, loss of taste/smell, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, body aches, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, chills, or muscle aches. Asymptomatic individuals will not be tested. Testing is available to all Portage County and WI residents and provided on a first-come first-served basis. Generally, test results are known within 48 hours of samples being submitted.

Participants will be asked to provide a current address, identify county of residence, a phone number and answer screening questions. Participants are to remain in their

vehicles at all times. National Guard members will be in uniform and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) including gowns, masks, and gloves while conducting tests. Participants are asked to please have patience, drive with caution, and follow directions. Drivers will be directed to enter the drive thru testing at Portage County HHS from highway HH to Whiting Avenue. Individuals tested will be advised to return directly home and self-isolate themselves until they receive their test results and further guidance from public health. Each participant will be informed of their results by phone.

Providing community-wide testing of COVID-19 offers a better understanding of the presence of the virus in our communities, allowing for additional planning and preparation to isolate individuals with the virus and trace their contacts. Additional positive cases may be identified, "If no additional cases are identified from this testing opportunity it won't mean we're in the clear. It will support the fact that social distancing is working, and we need to continue ongoing testing efforts in our community to support reopening activities," said Gary Garske, Portage County Health Officer. Ascension Medical Group, Aspirus- Stevens Point Campus, and Marshfield Clinic continue to offer testing opportunities to ensure that everyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms gets tested. The community-wide testing site at Portage County HHS is being supported by numerous community partners including the Division of Public Health, Stevens Point Police Department, Portage County Sheriff's Office, Stevens Point EMS, Portage County Emergency Management, Portage County Facilities Department, and Portage County Highway Department.

If you have questions or immediate needs related to COVID-19, call 2-1-1 or text COVID-19 to 211-211

For the latest information about COVID-19 in Portage County visit:

Portage County's COVID-19 website (https://www.co.portage.wi.us/department/health-and-human-services/division-of-public-health/covid-19-coronavirus-disease-2019/-fsiteid-1)

Portage County Division of Public Health Updates and Alerts
(https://www.co.portage.wi.us/department/health-and-human-services/division-of-public-health/covid-19-coronavirus-disease-2019/division-of-public-health-updates-and-alerts)
Portage County Division of Public Health Facebook page
(https://www.facebook.com/PortageCountyDPH/)

For the additional information and guidance on COVID-19, visit the CDC's website (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) or the DHS website (https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm).

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