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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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From: April Loeffler, Health Officer/Public Health Supervisor & Heidi Stewart, Health Officer/Director

COVID-19 Testing Increasing in Western WI with National Guard Assistance

LOCATION: Local public health departments in Western WI have requested assistance from the WI National Guard to scale up COVID-19 testing.

In our area, Buffalo and Pepin Counties are partnering to host a community COVID-19 specimen collection site in Alma on Friday, May 1st. Anyone 5 years and older with current symptoms of fever, cough, loss of taste/smell, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, body aches, diarrhea, vomiting or nausea, chills, shaking with chills, or muscle aches are eligible for nasal swab testing. High risk individuals (65 years of age or older, under 65 with underlying medical conditions, or any immunocompromised individual) without symptoms will also be tested. Testing through the collection site will be free of cost. If testing kits run out before the end of the event, we will update our Buffalo County Health and Human Services and Pepin County Health Department Facebook pages. Please visit our Facebook page before you leave home to ensure kits are still available. This event is only available to WI residents.

The drive-through collection site will be at the Buffalo County Highway Department located at S1672 State Highway 37, Alma, WI 54610.

Following testing, people should return straight home and isolate themselves until they receive their test results and further guidance from Public Health.

We have two goals with this event: 1) Provide our communities with mass testing, allowing local healthcare providers more time to increase their testing capacity, and, 2) Give Public Health better insight into how much COVID-19 is in our communities. Following this event, we will continue to work closely with our local healthcare providers to continue building their capacity to meet patient demand.

Providing a mass COVID-19 testing site offers a better understanding of the presence of the virus in our communities. This will only be a moment-in-time snapshot of its current activity.

There are plans for additional testing sites throughout the Western Region of Wisconsin in early May. Additional testing sites will be added to the Western WI Public Health Readiness Consortium <http://wwphrc.org/covid-19-community-testing/>.

If there are questions about the event, please call 211, for non-WI area code please use 1-877-947-2211, or email covid19@co.buffalo.wi.us.