

From: Secretary Joel Brennan
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 5:06:17 PM
Subject: Update

Good Evening DOA Team –

In normal times for many members of the DOA team, this weekend might mean a trip out of town or welcoming family and visitors to our homes. But we all know these are not normal times. Hopefully, many of us will be surrounded by immediate family this weekend, will reach out by phone or computer to friends and relatives in other places, and will find ways to be appreciative of the abundance that we still enjoy even in these uncertain times. I am thankful today and every day for the opportunity to work with talented and committed leaders who are serving Wisconsin in new and different ways.

As we all continue to abide by Governor Evers' "Safer at Home" Order, we see signs of progress here and elsewhere. Because so many of us are staying at home and restricting the spread of COVID-19, we have started to see signs that continued efforts can pay off by ensuring that we never experience a situation where the number of people who need care is greater than the available beds, equipment, and personnel to serve them. Please continue to monitor the State's collaborative efforts and the daily updates at www.dhs.wisconsin.gov in order to receive the most accurate information.

You can also find links to the Resilient Wisconsin Initiative that launched this week at the DHS website. Through your work, you take care of a great many people around Wisconsin, and you may be taking additional steps to care for those around you in these trying times. These resources will help you recognize your own potential areas of need and the ways that we can help you manage.

On Tuesday afternoon, my wife and I stood in line for two hours at a polling location in Milwaukee. We were among the thousands of state residents who applied for but did not receive absentee ballots, so we went in person to cast our votes. I place no blame for that on local election officials, who worked heroically to carry out the election. The overwhelming demand and their limited resources are just a few reasons why the Governor appropriately called for in-person voting to postponed. The most important reason for the Governor's action is that no one should have to choose between voting and their health.

As we stood in line (with appropriate social distancing maintained with other voters), the warm and sunny Spring day became ominous, and then rain fell, first in a sprinkle and then in a downpour. Finally, hail pelted down on everyone in line before the storm passed and the sun re-emerged. Almost nobody left the line, which stretched for 10 blocks. Volunteers handed out garbage bags to offer some protection, umbrellas were passed from the front of the line to the back, and everyone looked out for each other. I was embarrassed that we had failed as a State to do what was right to stop in-person voting that day, but I also was proud to stand with people who would not be denied their place in our electoral system. Those are the people you are working to support and assist during these tough times. They can't say thank you for the work you are doing to assist them, but I can.

I also couldn't help but see in that day a message about where we are as a State and as State employees. We are absolutely in a storm and we need one another more than ever, but the sun will eventually come out again, and our work together will help that day come sooner and allow more people to enjoy its warmth when it does.

The Department of Tourism has launched a grassroots movement to share the good-spirited things we're seeing and doing in Wisconsin to help each other during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you want to find out how our fellow Wisconsinites are being rays of sunlight for each other, search your favorite social media platform for the hashtag #HowWiHelp or check out the pictures on the [Department's website](#). Feel free to join in the movement by sharing photos of the many ways people, businesses and communities are helping one another and add the #HowWiHelp hashtag.

Thanks for your continued efforts both at work and at home to bring more light into our state.

Joel