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New AARP analysis shows COVID-19 deaths skyrocketing in Wisconsin nursing homes

MADISON, WISCONSIN – The latest release of [AARP's Nursing Home COVID-19 Dashboard](#) depicts a worsening crisis from coast to coast, including skyrocketing increases in deaths among Wisconsin nursing home residents since last fall.

In the four-week period ending Dec. 20, 9.9% of nursing homes in Wisconsin reported residents with confirmed cases of coronavirus, and 10.3% of these facilities had at least one staff member diagnosed. While those percentages are down slightly from the previous four-week period, the latest dashboard shows an increase in nursing home deaths related to COVID-19 over the same time period – from 2.11 deaths per 100 residents to 2.70.

What's even more startling is that COVID-19 deaths in Wisconsin nursing homes have increased nine-fold in just over two months – from 0.30 deaths per 100 residents in the Oct. 18 analysis to the latest dashboard showing 2.7 deaths per 100 residents.

“We know that rising cases of COVID-19 in nursing homes translate to rising death rates shortly thereafter based on our dashboard analysis. This most recent report confirms that fact following the explosion of cases we saw in the fall,” said AARP Wisconsin State Director Sam Wilson. “There are signs of hope on the horizon, but we are nowhere near out of the woods at this point.”

In Wisconsin, the rates of COVID-19 cases in nursing homes has dipped slightly. From Nov. 23 to Dec. 20, Wisconsin nursing homes had:

- 9.9 new COVID-19 cases per 100 residents, down from 13.4 in the previous four-week period.

- 2.7 COVID-19 deaths per 100 residents, up from 2.11.
- 10.3 new staff COVID-19 cases per 100 residents, down from 15.9.

Shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) have decreased slightly over the same period, from 39.7% of nursing homes without a one-week supply in November to 34.6% in December.

Meanwhile, staffing shortages remain a persistent problem, with 43.4% of facilities reporting a shortage in the most recent dashboard, which is down from 47.1% in the previous four-week period, but much higher than the 26.1% reported in June of 2020.

“Almost a year into the pandemic, we continue the clarion call that anything we can do, both big and small, to improve the health and safety of our nursing home residents and staff, matters,” Wilson said. “Vaccinations have started, but they will not make nursing home residents safe overnight.”

The [AARP COVID-19 Nursing Home Dashboard](#) analyzes federally reported data in four-week periods going back to June 1, 2020. Earlier this year, AARP fought for public reporting of nursing home COVID-19 cases and deaths.

Using this data, the AARP Public Policy Institute, in collaboration with the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University in Ohio, created the dashboard to provide snapshots of the virus’ infiltration into nursing homes and impact on nursing home residents and staff, with the goal of identifying specific areas of concern at the national and state levels in a timely manner.

The full dashboard is available at www.aarp.org/nursinghomedashboard. For more information on how COVID is impacting nursing homes and AARP’s advocacy on this issue, visit www.aarp.org/nursinghomes.

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