
**ORDER IN THE MATTER
OF RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Pursuant to Wisconsin Supreme Court Rules 70.19, 70.20, and 70.34, this court hereby issues the following order as it relates to circuit courts in the Fourth Judicial District responding to the COVID-19 virus:

Preserving access to our courts is fundamental to society and the rule of law. Judges must remain responsive to the rights of individuals to have their cases heard, as well as be cognizant of the health risks to victims, defendants, litigants, attorneys, witnesses, jurors, court staff, and the general public.

Given the extraordinary effects of the COVID-19 virus, including the impact of school closures throughout Wisconsin, it is therefore ordered that judges in in the Fourth Judicial District shall consider the following when making determinations about how to continue to conduct business in their courts:

- Rescheduling jury trials whenever possible and postponing jurors to later dates of service
- Liberally granting and encouraging adjournments to later dates that do not conflict with statutory timelines
- Suspending treatment court dates
- Encouraging the use of appearances by phone or video whenever possible and lawful
- Using “social distancing” practices
- Reducing the congregation of large groups of people, particularly high volume calendars
- Developing and updating county-wide court standards or practices whenever possible to continue to address the ongoing issues created by COVID-19

It is further ordered that the District Court Administrator will forward other counties’ local court orders related to COVID-19, as he receives them, to all the circuit court judges within the Fourth Judicial District to facilitate information sharing.

It is also ordered that counties in the Fourth Judicial District share any local court orders or plans related to COVID-19 with the District Court Administrator so that they can be posted on www.wicourts.gov. These should also be posted by the Clerks of Court on the local county website.

This order shall remain in effect until rescinded or amended.

DATED: 3-16-2020

BARBARA H. KEY, Chief Judge


