



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **The City of Milwaukee Health Department Collaborates with Common Ground**

MILWAUKEE – Common Ground, a community organization of 38 member institutions in and around Milwaukee, created a program with the Milwaukee Public Health Department to follow up with patients who test positive for COVID-19 and are sent home to heal. Across the City of Milwaukee, there have been over 13,000 positive COVID-19 cases to date with a disproportionate impact on people of color with Latinx and Black populations making up over 60% of positive cases and 70% of deaths. This indicates a drastic need in the community: equity of healthcare and access to resources for COVID-19. Common Ground's goal is to meet a part of that need by providing follow-up and care for those who have tested positive and do not require hospitalization.

“This program provides crucial support to those who have COVID-19 but don’t have a medical home. They get medical advice and daily reassurance that someone has their back throughout the course of their illness.” - Mariana Rincon, Physician from Sixteenth Street Community Health Clinic and volunteer with the Common Ground Community Health Volunteer Program.

Over 20 Common Ground volunteers from healthcare professions run the program and call patients who have opted-in to a daily check of their blood oxygen level and heart rate. These two numbers are taken from a pulse oximeter, loaned to the patient along with a cloth facemask they can keep. Volunteer Marilyn Hamilton, a retired pathologist stated, “This gives me a sense of being useful...I completely enjoy working as a volunteer caller for Common Ground...By the end of the 10 days I find it hard to say goodbye”.

Over 18 clinicians have also volunteered their time to staff a hotline for patient support if symptoms worsen or numbers become dangerous. By working with current and retired healthcare professionals, each patient feels safer healing at home knowing that someone will be checking in on them daily.

“On behalf of the City of Milwaukee Health Department, we are grateful for this partnership with Common Ground, which has increased our community’s ability to get connected to resources and reduce the spread of COVID-19”, stated Health Commissioner, Dr. Jeanette Kowalik.

Along with the Milwaukee Health Department, Common Ground is collaborating with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the American Health Education Center (AHEC) Milwaukee chapter to help with the necessary resources to fund this project. The program is modeled after one created by Common Ground's sister organization in Washington State, Spokane Alliance.

Common Ground is a non-partisan group of ordinary citizens of Southeast Wisconsin, dedicated to identifying problems facing our community and implementing creative solutions. You can join the campaign by contacting us directly at [info@commongroundwi.org](mailto:info@commongroundwi.org) or learn more at [commongroundwi.org](http://commongroundwi.org).

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