



Milwaukee Alternate Care Facility at Wisconsin State Fair Park: Frequently Asked Questions

FACILITY OPENING

- **How many patients are expected to be transferred to the facility on October 14?**
 - The facility currently anticipates opening with operations that can support a minimum of fifty patient beds, with the ability to steadily ramp-up operations to support health systems' capacity needs.
- **How many staff will be operating the facility?**
 - The ACF will follow traditional best practices for staffing ratios of a medical surge facility: approximately one RN and one Patient Care Associate to six patients.
- **How will patients from around the state be physically transferred to the ACF?**
 - ACF leaders will work in partnership with Wisconsin health systems to identify the safest and most efficient transport of individual patients to the facility.
- **How is operation of the facility being funded?**
 - Funding for the ACF will come from the \$445 million surge reserve fund set aside by Gov. Evers to ensure the ability of Wisconsin hospital systems and communities to handle a surge of COVID-19 cases. The state's testing needs are anticipated to exceed the original \$260 million budget by up to an additional \$270 million, which is also being covered by the reserve fund. These response programs are funded with the federal CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund, which only allows activities to be funded through the end of 2020.
- **Why did the facility not have patients up until now?**
 - This facility has been part of a statewide, on-going continuum of care for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. Although there has been significant work done to limit extreme capacity surges for Wisconsin's health systems, the recent and rapid increase in virus spread throughout the state is now overwhelming some health systems.

BACKGROUND

- **What is an Alternate Care Facility?**
 - Alternate Care Facilities (ACF) are places where care can be provided in a non-traditional temporary environment to accommodate the overflow of low-acuity COVID-19 patients from area hospitals and other acute care facilities should they exceed their capacity due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Why was the ACF needed in southeastern Wisconsin?**
 - Southeastern Wisconsin is one area of the state that has been heavily impacted by COVID-19, including the counties of Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Kenosha, Washington, and Ozaukee. The impact on these counties includes not only increased levels of individuals testing positive for COVID-19, but also elevated hospitalization utilization, and deaths as a result of the disease. Milwaukee County had multiple medical, epidemiology, and future operations teams comprised of all local municipalities, that identified projections requiring ACF infrastructure to meet the estimated surge capacity projections. These partners remain responsible for its success, including the Milwaukee County Executive, local Mayors, Milwaukee Commissioner of Health, Milwaukee County Medical Director, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Council, Milwaukee County Emergency Management, and others.

- **What was the process to engage the Army Corp of Engineers to construct the Milwaukee ACF?**
 - Local leaders in the Milwaukee area notified Governor Evers that they had significant concerns regarding the surge capacity of the region’s health systems in the face of the spread of COVID-19. These leaders represented both local elected officials and local health systems.
 - Additionally, Milwaukee County formally submitted a request to the Wisconsin Emergency Management team to build an ACF due to the predicted escalation in COVID-19 cases and pressure on the area’s health systems.
 - This request was then sent to FEMA, formally requesting support from US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) to design, engineer, and construct the facility as a temporary Alternate Care Facility. With direction from and in coordination with FEMA and the federal Department of Health and Human Services, USACE constructed the functional requirements for the ACF to function as a temporary accommodation for individuals needing care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Why was State Fair Park chosen as the location for this ACF?**
 - The Army Corp identifies existing locations that have several critical elements, which include things like ease of access, abundant parking, and proximity to health systems.
- **Who participated in the construction of the ACF?**
 - To construct the ACF, the US Army Corp of Engineers, carrying out their assignment, signed a contract with Gilbane Milwaukee along with several local subcontractors, including:
 - Johnson Controls
 - J.F. Ahern
 - Hetzel Sanfillipo
 - HGA
 - Staff Electric
 - Langer Roofing
 - Derse
 - Occupational Healthcare Associates
- **How many patient beds are at the facility?**
 - The Army Corp of Engineers constructed 530 patient spaces, of which 296 include in-line oxygen. Should expansion be needed, the facility can accommodate 754 total patient spaces.

PATIENT CARE

- **When will the facility begin accepting patients?**
 - [Emergency Order #32](#) authorized the use of the facility on April 23rd, 2020. Patients can only be transferred from an eligible hospital or other acute care entity and use of the facility is dependent upon their surge capacity usage and alignment with the facility’s clinical care criteria. The specific details of the patient transfer and clinical care admission criteria is available [HERE](#). The ACF leadership, or a designee, conducts a weekly review of the surge capacity of health systems in order to assess future ACF care needs and ensure proper use of the facility.
 - As a state-operated facility that serves eligible health systems outside of the Milwaukee-area, all eligible hospitals or other acute care entities have the ability to send their patients to the ACF.
- **What is the acuity level of the facility?**
 - The Milwaukee ACF is a low-acuity facility, which means that the patients served have minimal care requirements but still need some health monitoring and support before being discharged.
- **How does the ACF intersect with the isolation facilities in the Milwaukee area?**
 - The ACF is part of the continuum of care being provided to residents in response to the spread of COVID-19. The ACF provides service to individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are already a patient within a health system.

- **How are patients referred to the facility?**
 - The ACF does not directly accept walk-ins from members of the general public.
 - The ACF’s Chief Medical Officer works directly with eligible acute care hospitals, before a patient is accepted to the ACF, to ensure the patient’s needs match the level of care provided at the ACF. Additional details regarding eligible health systems are available [HERE](#).
 - Additionally, patients utilizing the ACF are individuals who have been a patient in an eligible hospital or other acute care entity at least 24-48 hours prior to being transferred to the facility.
- **How are patients transported to the facility?**
 - Once a patient is approved to come to the facility, the individual is transported via ground ambulance by Flight for Life.
- **What happens if an ACF patient requires a higher-level of patient care, once they get to the facility?**
 - Should an individual’s health decompensate and require emergency care while at the ACF, the individual will be transferred to the nearest hospital.
- **Are patients at the ACF allowed to have visitors?**
 - To limit the spread of COVID-19, visitors are prohibited at the ACF.
- **If a patient has a concern about a member of the ACF staff and/or their care, whom do they contact?**
 - The needs of the patients and their health care is the priority for ACF leadership and staff. Should an individual have concerns, patients are encouraged to contact the nursing directors on duty, the Chief Nursing Officer, or the facility’s Chief Executive Officer.

FACILITY OPERATIONS

- **Who oversees and is responsible for the operations at the Milwaukee ACF?**
 - The State of Wisconsin’s Department of Administration operates the ACF, as directed by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services in [Emergency Order #32](#).
- **How many individuals does the ACF employ?**
 - The number of individuals working at the facility will continue to be dependent upon the needs of the patients at the facility. As of mid-April, 200 individuals have been identified to serve, including a number of volunteers, members of the Wisconsin National Guard, and limited term state employees. Together these individuals include medical professionals and facility operations staff.
 - Identified staff only work at the facility when there are patients to care for.
- **If an individual is interested in volunteering or working at the ACF:**
 - Individuals (medical or nonmedical) interested in volunteering and/or working at the Milwaukee ACF, are encouraged to register on the [Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry \(WEAVR\)](#) and select “Milwaukee Alternate Care Site” under the “Statewide COVID-19 Responders” dropdown.
- **What is being done to ensure the health of the staff within the ACF?**
 - There are extensive processes in place to ensure all staff within the facility are provided resources and opportunities to maintain a sanitary and healthy work environment. This includes providing staff at the facility an appropriate supply of PPE, hand-washing stations, a process for temperature checks, access to an Employee Assistance Program, and testing or follow-up care as needed.
- **What is being done to ensure the security and health of the communities surrounding the ACF?**
 - There are extensive security and sanitizing efforts, along with infection disease protocols in place, to limit the exposure of COVID-19 to the surrounding areas from individuals located within the ACF.

FACILITY USE / DECOMISSIONING

- **How is it decided to decommission and/or use the ACF?**
 - The end of the pandemic is not currently known, and there are currently no plans to repurpose or decommission the facility.
 - The following organizations/individuals will be regularly reviewing data and health care system needs (both regionally and statewide):
 - The Wisconsin Department of Health Services
 - The Department of Administration
 - The ACF Leadership team
 - The Local Emergency Operations Groups
 - And other local and state health officials identified by the abovementioned
 - The Department of Administration is physically responsible for the process of decommissioning the site, which means bringing everything back to its original state for Wisconsin State Fair Park, including complete sanitation of the facility. Once a decision is made by the groups identified above, the Department of Administration will coordinate decommissioning efforts.