



## WAUKESHA PUBLIC LIBRARY

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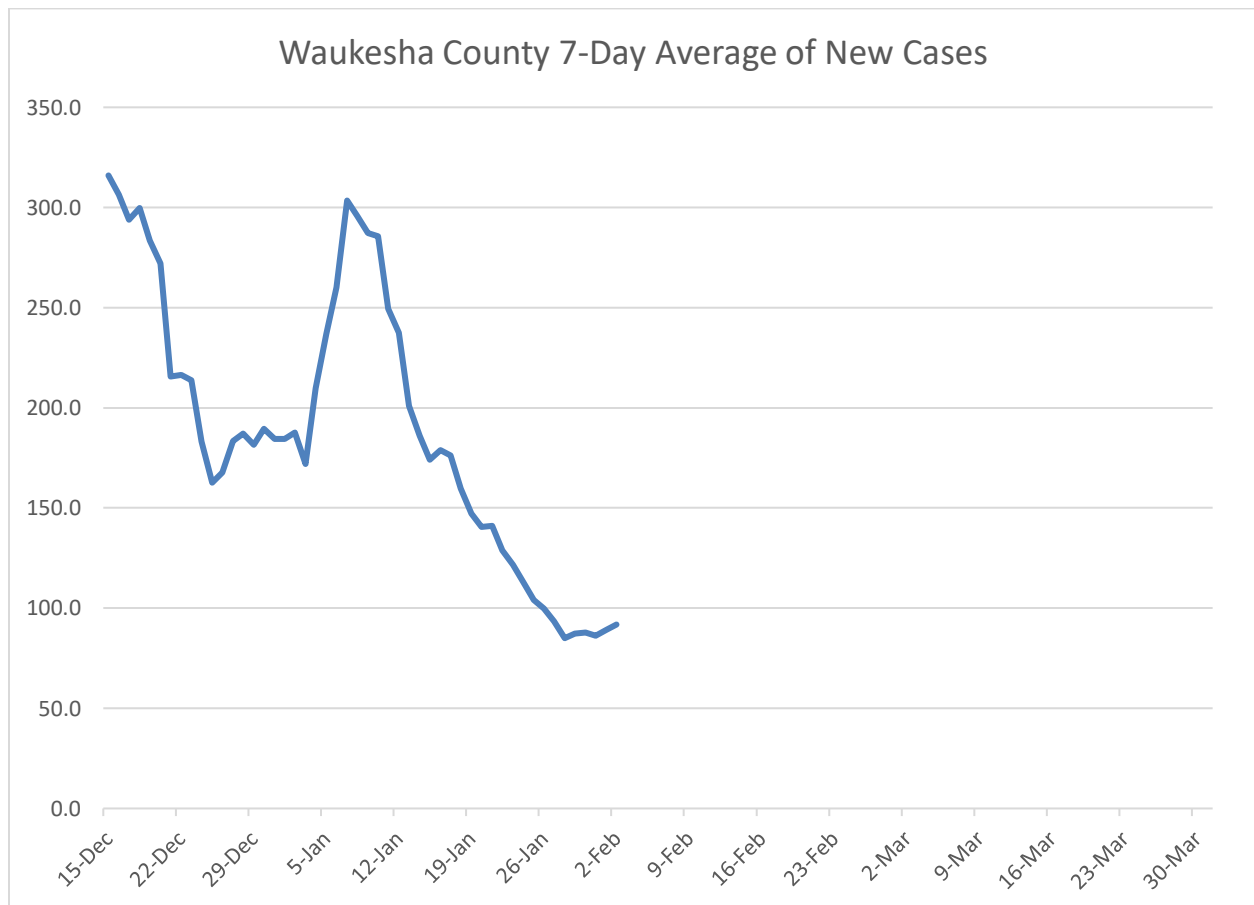
February 3, 2021

To: Library Board of Trustees  
From: Bruce Gay, Library Director  
Re: Library Pandemic Response

Between the time I write the monthly pandemic report and the date of the board meeting, a lot can change. This is the current thinking as of February 3, with the possibility of changes in all areas.

### Re-opening Stages:

In January the seven-day average of new cases in Waukesha County dropped from a high of 303 to an end-of-the-month low of 86.



On January 27 I emailed all library staff asking for input on the library's next stages and put forward a basic set of next steps:

1. Open the full library for browsing of materials. Continue to encourage short visits by removing public chairs and public computers. Also, extend hours on at least one evening to better meet customer needs.
2. Monitor the effects of allowing browsing. When safe, return library to full, regular hours (Monday through Thursday 9-8:30, Friday 9 to 6, Saturday 9-5, and Sundays during the school year 1-5). Continue to encourage short visits.
3. Add public computers on a limited basis with shortened daily time limits when new cases are consistently low.
4. Return public seating throughout the library.

The steps are ordered in this way based on two factors. First are customer comments—the ability to browse the collection is by far the most common request, followed by being able to use the library at least one evening a week. Second, as more has been learned about the virus it is now understood that infected surfaces are very unlikely to lead to catching the Coronavirus. We no longer need to sanitize all surfaces like we did at the beginning of the pandemic. Instead studies show that contagion occurs through the air, which is why we'll continue to encourage short visits, remove chairs, and limit computer use.

The library will continue to monitor Waukesha County case rates and move to the next stage when the seven-day average approaches 50. Obviously if cases rise again, we would consider moving to more restricted services.

#### Masks:

As a City of Waukesha building, the library will continue to require masks for all visitors based on City rules, even if the Wisconsin legislature strikes down the Governor's emergency order.

#### Vaccines:

There is some debate on which group Library staff will fall under for the vaccine—group 1B or 1C. Final evaluations and vaccination procedures are not yet known. I believe the best-case would-be staff getting vaccinated early in March. The City has been providing some vaccines for staff, and department directors have been told to be ready to send staff for vaccines if extra doses are available.

