
From: Madden, Zach A - GOV <zach.madden@wisconsin.gov>

Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2020 3:02 PM

To: Rep.Thiesfeldt <Rep.Thiesfeldt@legis.wisconsin.gov>

Cc: Huber, Grant S - DPI <Grant.Huber@dpi.wi.gov>; Hoyer-Booth, Andrew G - DHS <andrew.hoyerbooth@dhs.wisconsin.gov>

Subject: RE: Youth Sports Letter - Rep. Thiesfeldt

Zach,

Thanks for sending the letter. I know DPI has already been in touch with your office, but I also wanted to respond.

The Representative's request to provide guidance to youth sports was noted along with the similar requests we received from several legislators. Knowing this was a topic of interest across the state, the Department of Health Services began work on guidance and this week the Department has published that guidance here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/community.htm>

The reality is that the public health experts still believe these activities should continue to be postponed or cancelled through the spring and summer due to COVID-19. We certainly understand the importance of these sporting activities for the community as a whole, and the positive benefits from youth participating. That being said, we cannot just simply look past the vast and unique challenges in terms of social distancing and sanitation as it relates to youth sports whether it is practice, the game play itself, or the crowds, interactions, and travel of tournaments. I understand the Representative disagrees, and that there is a fundamental disagreement over how we respond to this particular communicable disease, which is ultimately what led to legislative Republicans suing over the safer at home order. The Governor will continue to listen to science and the advice of public health experts notwithstanding the ruling on safer at home.

While the court's order kept intact that closure of schools for pupil instruction and extracurricular activities, the youth sports activities the Representative describes in the letter are allowable unless there is a local health order or the school district determines they don't want to allow the use of their facilities. I understand that this could be frustrating as one youth sports league may be using multiple districts' buildings and those districts may have different opinions and policies on these activities in light of COVID-19. It certainly would have been our hope to have a more unified and consistent approach in reopening and allowing certain activities when safe, unfortunately, that decision has been made for us due to legislative republicans lawsuit.

As it relates to the SMART Start guidance, we certainly appreciate the thought that went in to the recommendations. Certainly, these recommendations appear to be a good start for when youth sports begin again. That being said, we still believe that all youth sporting events planned for this spring and summer should be postponed or canceled until we meet the benchmarks established in the Badger Bounce Back plan.

Thanks,
ZM

Zach Madden

Legislative Liaison

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