**Fiscal Facts: While ‘Safer at Home,’ Wisconsinites get moving again**

Despite safer-at-home orders in place through May 26, many Wisconsinites already had become more mobile than in the opening weeks of the pandemic, according to data from Cuebiq, a private company that uses GPS features on mobile devices to track movement anonymously.

Throughout the end of March and all of April, Wisconsinites everywhere greatly reduced their traveling compared to the past year. In fact, the data show state residents actually began staying put before Gov. Tony Evers’ March 25 safer-at-home order. As time went on, however, the data suggest Wisconsinites got back on the move. Despite the news of more confirmed coronavirus cases in April than March, all 72 Wisconsin counties showed movement patterns closer to what they were over the previous 365 days as the summer approached.

A number of factors could influence these numbers. First, with evidence indicating the virus may spread far less easily outside, more Wisconsinites – especially as the weather became warmer - may have taken advantage of improving outdoor conditions by leaving the house to exercise, or visit a state park or forest.

Second, many people may have simply grown tired of quarantine conditions over the course of two-plus months. The recent gradual re-opening of retail stores, bars, restaurants and other attractions (with many restrictions still in place) could mean the trend back towards normal mobility continues.

It is also important to note that these data but do not account for whether people, as they became more mobile, continued to practice social distancing and other behaviors urged by public health officials. Ultimately, the course of the virus – and people’s perception of it – will be among the determining factors.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.*