



The effects of COVID-19 on Wisconsin's workers and firms[†]

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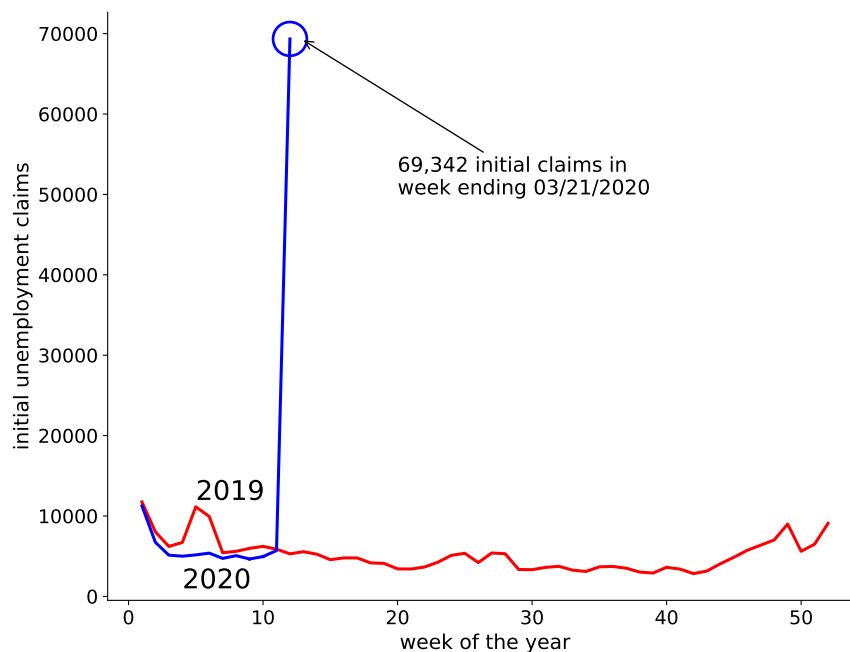
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This note highlights two high-frequency data series that show some of the effects of COVID-19 on Wisconsin workers and firms. This report is part of a larger effort at CROWE to document and analyze the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Updated figures and analysis are available at <https://crowe.wisc.edu/impact-of-covid19>. Updated versions of this data brief are available at <https://crowe.wisc.edu/data-briefs>.

Initial unemployment claims

The “social distancing” required as part of the response to COVID-19 has created a sharp increase in Wisconsin workers seeking unemployment insurance. We focus on *initial unemployment claims*, which measure applications for benefits from workers who were not currently receiving benefits.

Figure 1: Wisconsin initial unemployment claims, weekly

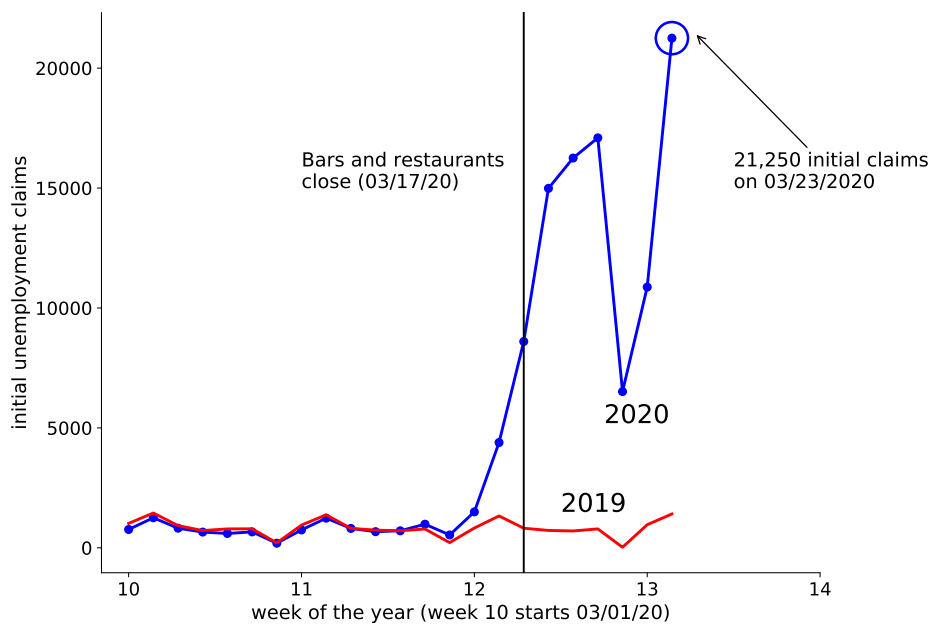


[†] Data briefs are short, timely reports that use data to highlight economic issues of importance to policy makers, business leaders, and the public. This brief, and the data and code that underlie it, are available at crowe.wisc.edu. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Center for Research on the Wisconsin Economy, the Department of Economics, or the University of Wisconsin.

In figure 1, we plot initial claims by week. Historically, unemployment claim data are released on a weekly basis. Up through the week ending March 7, initial claims in 2020 were below their levels in 2019. The week ending March 14 saw a small uptick in claims, and in the week ending March 21, initial claims exploded. In that week, 69,342 people filed for benefits who were previously not receiving them. In the first 11 weeks of 2020 a total of 61,249 initial claims were made: The week ending March 21 saw more claims than the entire year to date.

The Department of Workforce Development recently began releasing daily initial unemployment claims data going back to March 1, 2020. We plot these data in figure 2. Claims begin to accelerate on March 16 through March 20. Initial claims drop during the weekend, which is a pattern evident in the data before the pandemic and to be expected. It remains to be seen how claims will evolve with layoffs spreading to manufacturing industries.

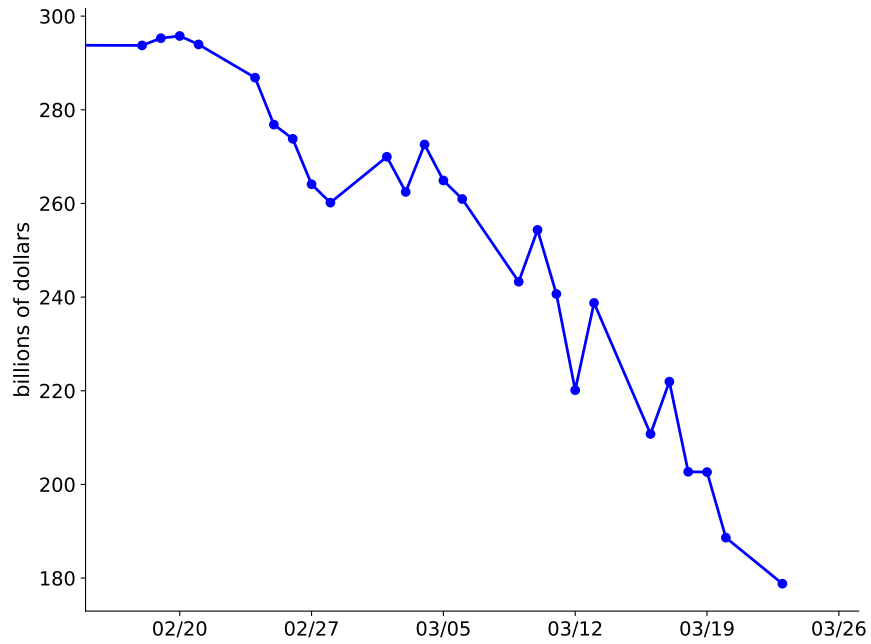
Figure 2: Wisconsin initial unemployment claims, daily



The value of Wisconsin firms

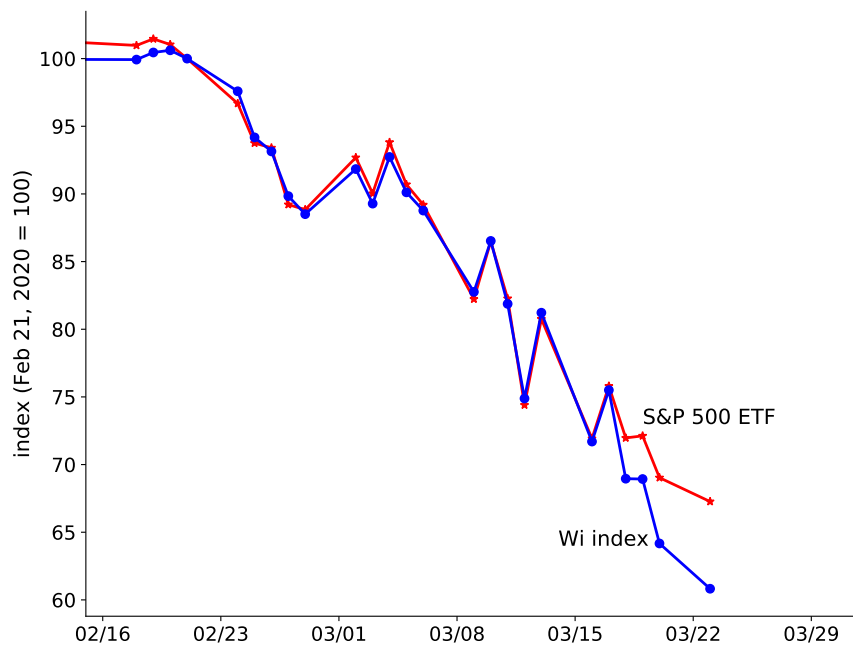
Lacking high-frequency data on all Wisconsin firms, we turn to its publicly traded firms, whose share prices are readily available. Many of these firms operate at the national or international scale, so their outlook depends on broader aspects of the economy. In figure 3, we plot the market capitalization of Wisconsin's publicly-traded firms. There are about 60 publicly-traded firms headquartered in Wisconsin. We were able to compute market capitalization for 56 of them. The firms included in the index are listed in the appendix. Market capitalization was about 290 billion dollars on February 21. As of March 20, these Wisconsin businesses have lost over 100 billion dollars of value.

Figure 3: Market capitalization of Wisconsin public firms



The magnitude of loss in Wisconsin firms is similar to that in the broader market. In figure 4, we plot the market capitalization of Wisconsin's public firms, but normalized so that it is equal to 100 on February 21. For comparison, we plot the S&P 500 ETF price, normalized in a similar way. The two series move very closely until most recently, when the Wisconsin index has declined more than the national index.

Figure 4: Market capitalization of Wisconsin public firms



Appendix

The firms included in the market capitalization analysis are: 1895 Bancorp Of Wisconsin Inc, Actuant Corp, Alliant Energy Corp, Artisan Partners Asset Management Inc, Associated Banc-Corp, Badger Meter Inc, Bank First National Corp, Brady Corp, Briggs & Stratton Corp, County Bancorp Inc, Douglas Dynamics Inc, Duluth Holdings Inc, Exact Sciences Corp, FFBW Inc, First Business Financial Services Inc, Fiserv Inc, Generac Holdings Inc, Harley Davidson Inc, Jason Industries Inc, Johnson Controls International Plc, Johnson Outdoors Inc, Kohls Corp, Koss Corp, Lands' End Inc, Manitowoc Co Inc, Manpowergroup Inc, Marcus Corp, Marten Transport Ltd, MGE Energy Inc, MGIC Investment Corp, Modine Manufacturing Co, National Presto Industries Inc, Nicolet Bankshares Inc, Orion Energy Systems Inc, Oshkosh Corp, Physicians Realty Trust, Plexus Corp, Quad/Graphics Inc, Regal Beloit Corp, Rev Group Inc, Rexnord Corp, Roadrunner Transportation Systems Inc, Rockwell Automation Inc, Schneider National Inc, Sensient Technologies Corp, Smith A. O. Corp, Snap-On Inc, Sonic Foundry Inc, Spectrum Brands Holdings Inc, Strattec Security Corp, Twin Disc Inc, Waterstone Financial Inc, WEC Energy Group Inc, and Weyco Group Inc.