

## **Subject: City of Milwaukee Health Commissioner Vacancy**

To: President Hamilton, and City of Milwaukee Council members,

From: Ellen K. Murphy, RN, MS, JD, FAAN

Professor Emerita, UWM College of Nursing

Re: City Health Commissioner vacancy

cc. Mayor Barrett

17 August, 2018

I write to urge your action to confirm a permanent City of Milwaukee Health Department Commissioner without further delay. While last week's issue related to scope of nursing practice seems to have been resolved, I am left seriously questioning the actions and judgement of the Interim Commissioner. Given other issues that have made the press since her appointment as Interim, especially the continuing inadequately addressed lead issue, she seems unqualified to serve as our City Health Commissioner.

My concerns are based on my UWM faculty career as a Masters' prepared RN with a JD from UW-Madison Law School. Having served as a Clinical Nurse specialist at (then) UW Hospital, I have taught many undergraduate clinical and graduate Leadership and Management courses at (then) UWM School of Nursing. I also taught graduate level Health Law in both the School of Nursing and the School of Business. During that time, I was well aware of the national prestige our City Health Department brought to Milwaukee.

Last week's confusion, and more importantly, last week's interruption of badly needed STI services, need not have happened. Nursing's scope of practice related to delegated medical acts related to these types of physical exams and specimen collection has been a settled issue since Wisconsin Administrative Code, Board of Nursing N.6.03-Standards of practice for registered nurses was approved in the mid 1980's. Knowledge of similar current practice in community health clinics in Milwaukee could have been refreshed by calls to colleague Milwaukee community clinic directors and/or the State Board of Nursing.

Similarly, the Council took action to address the previous Commissioner's neglect of our longstanding lead issues over 6 months ago. Why then are articles related to inadequate staff and supervision performance related to lead practice still appearing? It appears nothing has been put in place to comprehensively address the lead problem.

In conclusion, our city needs a new permanent City Health Commissioner as soon as possible. We must restore competent and timely services to persons who need them and begin to reclaim the Milwaukee City Health Department's previous stature.

Ellen K. Murphy

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