



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes

### BOARD OF HEALTH

**DR. WUJIE ZHANG, CHAIR**

**Tahira Malik, VICE-CHAIR**

***Ruthie Burich-Weatherly, Caroline Gomez-Tom, Dr. Ian Martin,  
Ericka Sinclair, Penelope Stewart, and Dr. Darlene Beck***

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Thursday, November 7, 2024

5:30 PM

City Hall, 200 E Wells St, Rm 303

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#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

#### 2. Roll Call

**Present** 8 - Zhang, Malik, Burich-Weatherly, Gomez-Tom, Sinclair, Martin, Stewart and Beck

**Absent** 1 - Zamarripa

#### 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 5, 2024

Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly motioned to approve, Vice Chair Tahira Malick seconded, and the motion passed with all in favor and one abstention from Board Member Dr. Beck given her recent appointment.

#### 4. Announcements

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang recognized the Health Department Lab's Exemplary Partnership Award from BESTD during BESTD's recent 50th Anniversary celebration. Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang welcomed new Board Member Dr. Darlene Beck. Board Member Darlene Beck and current Board Members introduced themselves.

#### 5. Communication from Health Commissioner Dr. Mike Totoraitis

Commissioner Totoraitis provided Board Members with the Racism Is a Public Health Crisis report. Commissioner Totoraitis presented an update on the upcoming budget adoption (including mandated functions, the 2025 unified budget, and new healthy food access funding), Lead Program (including MHD's new testing guidance, the status of ARPA and HUD RFPs, and the hiring of compliance staff), communicable disease (including wastewater surveillance on COVID-19 and H5N1 as well as data on Rhinovirus), and Racial Equity (including MHD's logic model, timeline, and future projects).

Commissioner Totoraitis said he will share DHS data on vaccination rates in a follow-up email.

Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom asked how the Racism Is a Public Health Crisis Report has been shared. Commissioner Totoraitis said that the report was shared to the Equal Rights Commission, the Big City Health Coalition, and Common Council and the Mayor. Commissioner Totoraitis said there was a plan to present a communication file to Common Council and to prepare a dedicated webpage for the report. Chair Wujie Zhang requested the document be linked to the minutes (please see File 231422 at the end of this document).

Board Member Dr. Ian Martin asked about how the shifting landscape concerning DEI has impacted MHD's work. Commissioner Totoraitis spoke to the use of federal grants for this work and the prohibition under WI Act 12 on using tax dollars. Commissioner Totoraitis noted that regardless of future funding, MHD has a solid foundation that has equipped staff with tools to continue its efforts.

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang asked about the MHD Statement on Commitment to Anti-Racism. Commissioner Totoraitis responded that the statement will be prepared by the Equity Advisory Committee and that the statement was requested by the Mayor as well. The statement will expand upon the 2019 Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Crisis. Strategy Director Marques Hogans responded that the Equity Advisory Committee will be reviewing the statement in the next few months. Commissioner Totoraitis stated that the statement draft will be shared at future Board meeting.

Board Member Darlene Beck asked a question about the start time for the Birth Outcomes Made Better program for fathers and its marketing. Deputy Commissioner Wright responded that the grant had just been awarded in October with the goal of a rollout in Q2 of next year. The program intends to engage at least 100 fathers each year. Board Member Penelope Steward encouraged utilizing existing men's groups to reach this population.

## **6. MKE Elevate Presentation**

Strategy Director Marques Hogans presented on MKE Elevate. He provided an overview of the history of the goals and how they have shifted, the 2024 SMARTIE goals, major recent accomplishment, future projects, implementation partners, and upcoming MKE Elevate events.

Board Member Penelope Stewart asked a question about evaluating the reckless driving campaign. Strategy Director Marques Hogans said evaluation was a partnership between Mayor's Office and MHD. Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom pointed to the Milwaukee County Collision Dashboard as a data source.

Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom referenced collaborative efforts between the County and Office of Community Wellness and Safety on credible messaging and youth firearm interventions as programs to examine at MHD.

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang encouraged members to attend the MKE Elevate Action Team Meetings.

#### **7. Branch Collaboration Assignment Finalization & Updates**

Branch Collaboration Assignments are as follows:

Commissioner – Dr. Wujie Zhang and Tahira Malik  
PIE – Caroline Gomez-Tom and Penelope Stewart  
FCH – Tahira Malik and Ald. JoCasta Zamarripa  
Clinical Services – Dr. Ian Martin, Dr. Darlene Beck, Ericka Sinclair  
Environmental Health – Ruthie Burich-Weatherly and Ericka Sinclair

No further updates at this time.

#### **8. Future Agenda Items**

- Scheduling for 2025
- Rotation of Branch Presentations
- State Legislative Package

Board Member Dr. Martin and Board Member Penelope Steward requested workday times for the Board meetings. Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang suggested sending out a poll to determine a new date/time.

Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom requested a presentation on lead enforcement and its evaluation approach.

Board Member Dr. Ian Martin requested a briefing on the public health funding landscape under the next federal administration.

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang encouraged in person attendance whenever possible.

**9. Adjournment**

Board Member Dr. Ian Martin motioned to adjourn, Board Member Penelope Stewart seconded the motion, and it passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 pm.

[231422](#)

Communication relating to those documents submitted to the Board of Health for its meetings in 2024.