

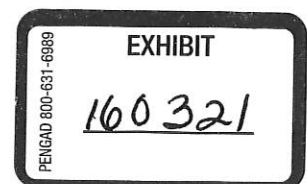
To the Members of the Public Safety Committee
Remarks by Commissioner of Health Re-appointee

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Before the Public Safety Committee

City of Milwaukee

June 23, 2016



Thank you very much. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. It is with great humbleness that I come before this Committee as Mayor Barrett's re-appointee to be the Commissioner of Health for the City of Milwaukee. I would like to thank you for the extraordinary courtesy and support you have extended to me over the last week. I would like to thank Mayor Barrett for the confidence he has expressed by nominating me for reappointment as Commissioner of Health.

Mr. Chairman, I do have a prepared statement. I would like to abbreviate it, however, if I may place the prepared statement in the record.

It has been my honor to serve the City of Milwaukee as Commissioner of Health for twelve years. I consider it the highest privilege to be asked to lead such an outstanding organization dedicated to serving the residents of this great city.

I am most thankful to my wife, daughter and son for their unconditional love and support as I face the demands of public service.

It has been truly rewarding to join so many talented people in responding to the challenges facing this city. There is no greater honor than to serve our fellow citizens. To this end, four years ago I committed to setting a vision along with bold goals to address public health issues within our city. I am pleased to share the Milwaukee Health Department's (MHD) progress today.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

In partnership with the United Way of Greater Milwaukee in early 2008, the City of Milwaukee Health Department set an aggressive, public goal to reduce births to 15 to 17 year olds by 46% by 2015. The United Way of Greater Milwaukee has spearheaded this effort, and I have co-chaired the initiative for eight years now.

Since setting the goal, Milwaukee has recorded a decrease in the teen birth rate every year, which is now at a historically low level. At the start of my tenure as Commissioner, the teen birth rate was 62 per 1,000 girls who gave birth. Today, I am pleased to report that not only met our goal but we surpassed our goal three years early with our data indicating a 50% decrease in teen births. Our most recent data reflects a 54% decrease in teen births since 2006. While this is great news, we are not done. In 2013, the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative announced another ambitious goal – to reduce the 2013 overall rate by another 50%, to 11.4 births per 1,000, by 2023.

Infant mortality Reduction

Infant mortality has been one of my highest priorities as Health Commissioner. As you know, Milwaukee has one of the highest infant mortality rates for African American babies in the nation. Milwaukee's African American infant mortality rate is 14.9 per 1000 live births. Roughly 50-60% of deaths are due to complications of prematurity, about 20% due to congenital anomalies, and about 20% to unsafe sleep. In 2011, Mayor Barrett and I set a goal for 2017. Our stated goal is to reduce the overall Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) by 10% to 9.4 per 1000 live births and to reduce the African American Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) by 15% to 12.0 per 1000 live births. While it will be

extremely difficult to reach our African American Infant Mortality Rate goal, we are on track to meet we are on track to meet our 2017 overall IMR goal. We will redouble our efforts and join countless community partners to aggressive attack infant mortality with the Milwaukee's African American community.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

In the last four years, we have led rapid and effective responses to multiple outbreaks of communicable diseases of state, regional and national importance and scope including in 2014 experiencing what was previously considered improbable, a case of Ebola Virus Disease in the United States. Elizabethkinga infections and deaths have stressed the public health system in Wisconsin and required our epidemiologists and laboratory scientists to work in close partnership with state and federal authorities. And as I present to you this morning, we are preparing to respond to the global threat and concern of Zika virus.

Immunization Rates

The percentage of children enrolled in MPS who are in compliance with school immunization law increased from 67% to 89% between 2004-05 and 2014-15 school years respectively.

The Future

If the honor of confirmation is bestowed upon me by this body, it would be my privilege to work in earnest with you to jointly address public health priorities including violence prevention, workforce development, the environmental concern of lead exposure, food safety, national public health accreditation and the reduction of sexually transmitted disease with particular focus on HIV transmission.

It is my hope that we will continue our role as a one the leading academic public health departments in the nation by maximizing research and grant opportunities from all funding sources including state, federal and private foundations.

Last, I would like to briefly state what I am most proud of as I recall the last four years as Health Commissioner of this great city. It is has been the distinct honor of working daily with health department employees who are responsible for countless successes that will never make the newspaper, television or radio. What's more, I remain honored to have met countless residents of this city who share the understanding that you and I have which is that together we can safeguard the public health and transform the population health status of Milwaukee.

If confirmed by the Common Council, I pledge to provide the indispensable leadership, management and energy to support health department staff. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this public safety committee to protect the public's health.

While there is much work yet to be done, I commit to you and the residents of this city to do my very best to make Milwaukee the healthiest city in the nation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to appear before you and the members of the Public Safety Committee today. I welcome your questions and comments.