

City of Milwaukee Health Department Budget Hearing

Presented to the Members of the Finance & Personnel Committee

City of Milwaukee Common Council

Alderman Michael J. Murphy, Chair
Alderman Robert J. Bauman, Vice Chair
Alderman Milele A. Coggs
Alderman Joe Dudzik
Alderman Nik Kovac

October 13, 2009

By

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health
City of Milwaukee Health Department

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and members of the Finance and Personnel Committee. I'm Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker and I thank you for the opportunity to share the City of Milwaukee Health Department's accomplishments, and our 2010 proposed budget. But before I begin, I'd like to thank the over 260 dedicated MHD employees who work tirelessly and diligently to improve the health of Milwaukee residents.

The Health Department is committed to protecting residents and visitors to the City of Milwaukee from infectious diseases and environmental hazards that may occur within the community. From monkey pox and SARS to measles and pertussis and now the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, the health department has a long-standing tradition of quickly responding to outbreaks and emergencies to safeguard the public's health.

This spring, residents witnessed the entrance of a novel influenza strain into our community. The Health Department has been preparing for this scenario for a very long time and we will continue to make prudent efforts toward minimizing the spread of disease and safeguarding the health of our residents as the virus remains in our community this fall.

Today I'd like to discuss two main topics:

- 1) The department's key accomplishments
- 2) And details of new revenue-generating initiatives that will enhance our operations in 2010

SECTION 1. KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

H1N1 Response

On April 26, the United States Department of Homeland Security declared a nationwide public health emergency after rising reported cases of H1N1 flu in the US. That same day, the Health Department activated its emergency response plans to address the threat of potential disease in our community and we stood up our internal Incident Command System to manage resources and facilitate decision-making. This was several days before the first Milwaukee cases were identified.

The Health Department also markedly enhanced surveillance and testing for disease to determine how much virus was circulating in the community, as well as to better understand the severity of illness based on hospitalization presentation and admission data. We set-up special clinics for testing and treatment of uninsured and underinsured individuals and augmented our

departmental laboratory and epidemiological resources to ensure adequate testing and follow-up in the community. In fact, we were one of only three labs in the state that could mirror the confirmatory testing done by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Throughout the spring outbreak, the number of cases in Milwaukee was consistently higher than what had been confirmed in most US states. But, the city of Milwaukee had fewer deaths.

We attribute this to our department's early enhanced surveillance, aggressive testing and excellent laboratory capacity locally and statewide, earlier exposure and more widespread disease than other municipalities, excellent communication with local healthcare providers, Milwaukee's local healthcare capacity, and possibly other variables. In fact, our data collection was so robust that researchers from the Harvard University School of Public Health approached us for participation in an international study to learn more about the outbreak.

Back-to-School Health Fair

This summer, the Health Department took a major step forward in community involvement and the formation of strategic partnerships by launching the city's first annual Milwaukee Child Health Week in collaboration with area HMO's. The week promoted the importance of access to a medical provider and encouraged parents to assure basic health services for children that support school readiness.

This year, the Health Department was pleased to expand the city's largest Back-to-School Health Fair to two locations, one at South Division High School on August 14 and the Fitzsimonds Boys and Girls Club on August 15. Nearly 6300 children and their parents/guardians received information and free health services necessary for children to be ready for school this fall, including immunizations, blood lead tests, hearing and dental screens and physical examinations. In addition, more than 3300 children received backpacks loaded with school supplies.

The south side event saw its largest crowds ever, with more than 800 families, totaling 4000 individuals, lining up early to receive services. On the north side, at the Fitzsimonds Boys and Girls Club, the Health

Department partnered with the Milwaukee Urban League to host one of their most successful events to date, with nearly 1200 attendees participating in the event.

Northwest Health Center Lease

One example I'm very pleased to share that illustrates key partnerships is our recent collaboration with the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, or DPH. DPH is currently utilizing available space at our Northwest Health Center to offer Medicaid Outreach services. This lease agreement has generated approximately \$250,000 in unbudgeted revenue to the city this fiscal year.

Grant Funding

The Health Department has continued success in grant receipt. This year, our department received 17 new grants, totaling more than \$13.7 million.

Among the grants received is a \$1.2 million Public Health Emergency Response (PHER) grant to support and enhance our infrastructure during H1N1 planning and response, a \$3 million grant to promote the wellness of children from birth to age 8, and \$7 million in lead funding to support

housing and community-based primary prevention of childhood lead poisoning in Milwaukee.

Healthy Birth Outcomes

Infant Mortality

Although 2007 saw a decrease in our infant mortality rate, Milwaukee's infant mortality rate, especially for African American babies, is still one of the worst in the nation. The City of Milwaukee Health Department oversees a number of initiatives aimed at decreasing the infant mortality rate, including the Fetal/Infant Mortality Review, which examines each death in detail to understand what could have prevented it. The Health Department also has two intensive home visiting programs that have shown impressive results in the birth outcomes of their clients.

The Empowering Families of Milwaukee (EFM) and Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) programs have cut in half the rates of prematurity and low birthweight of their clients, compared to other births in the zip codes in which the programs operate. Prematurity and low birthweight rates in the program zip codes average 19% of all births. However, clients enrolled in the EFM and NFP programs have average rates of 10% for prematurity and

LBW amongst their clients. Both EFM and NFP are evidenced-based intensive home visiting programs for high risk pregnant women and their children aimed at improving birth outcomes, increasing child health, safety, and development, decreasing child abuse and neglect, and increasing school readiness. These programs are funded by a combination of O&M funds and grant support, and the 2010 budget proposal includes funds to continue these very important and highly effective and successful programs.

Healthy Behaviors

Teen Pregnancy

The birth rate among Milwaukee teens remains at its lowest level since 1979. Visible programs like the United Way billboard campaign and the Health Department's No Condom? No Way! and Plain Talk Campaigns continue to raise community awareness about teen pregnancy, and its impact on education and economic issues in our City.

In addition, Mayor Barrett and I have provided leadership and guidance to the United Way's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Oversight Committee for the past three years. This group is made up of key community agencies and representatives that have been working to implement a 10 point plan called

If Truth Be Told to reduce teen births in our City, including some high-profile programs that target boys and the parents of adolescents.

Immunizations

Continued strong collaboration with Milwaukee Public Schools during the 2008-2009 school year markedly improved student immunization compliance rates from 71% to 82%. In addition, the Health Department formed partnerships with both the Boys and Girls Club and Milwaukee Fire Department to provide immunization to Milwaukee citizens. The innovative partnership between the Health Department and the Fire Department also provided an opportunity to evaluate the use of Fire Station Engine Houses as mass clinic sites to serve the public in during a catastrophic event such as pandemic influenza. During 2008-2009 school year, the Health Department provided over 30,000 immunizations to children and adults representing a 14% increase over the previous year.

Food Inspection Program Changes

Prevention of foodborne illness remains a top priority in our department. Each day staff monitor Milwaukee's restaurants and large sports and entertainment facilities through food inspections to protect the city's health.

In 2009, The Health Department implemented three key changes in our food inspection program that will further safeguard the health and safety of restaurant patrons.

In early 2009, the Health Department began issuing a placard after inspections of licensed food establishments. The placard lists the establishment's name, address, name of licensee and most recent date of MHD inspection. The placard also has information for patrons on how to access inspection reports for the premises on the Health Department website. Once the health inspection has been completed by the Inspector, the placard must be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises of the licensed establishment readily and easily visible to the public, such as the front door, front window or the front service area that is accessible to all patrons.

To appropriately focus Health Department food inspection program resources on those food operations which may pose the greatest food safety risk to consumers, we realigned staff and changed field protocols to ensure that restaurants located within the City of Milwaukee are inspected at an increased frequency based on the complexity of food service. A restaurant in the highest risk category may receive up to three inspections per year,

while one in the lowest category may only be inspected once per year. In addition, as inspections are conducted throughout the year, inspectors will request, confirm and/or update the establishments' fax number and e-mail address to facilitate future communication with our department.

Healthy Lifestyle

Lead

The City of Milwaukee Health Department received two grants that total approximately \$6.9 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to eliminate lead hazards in homes within the city. These grants will enable the abatement of more than 1450 housing units over the next three years through well-developed partnerships and a strong commitment by Milwaukee rental property owners. Contracts with community-based agencies will allow for interim control and educational activities to be implemented in targeted neighborhoods. The Health Department has established a model to reduce lead poisoning in children through community and housing-based intervention that has been replicated nationwide. There are approximately 42,000 "at risk" Milwaukee housing units in targeted neighborhoods. Since May 1997, nearly 14,000 of those, housing units have been made lead-safe through MHD inspection,

enforcement efforts, innovative partnerships and HUD-funded primary prevention subsidies to home and property owners.

MHD also secured funding this year that enabled the department to purchase four additional X-Ray Fluorescence Handheld Analyzers, bringing the departmental total to 16. The analyzers will be used within our Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to determine the concentration of lead within painted surfaces of the house and allow MHD Lead Risk Assessors to more rapidly identify the location of lead hazards within a housing unit.

This equipment also benefits the property owners participating in our primary prevention program by identifying locations where lead paint exist regardless if it is a hazard or not. If a property owner knows the location of where lead paint exists in the house if there is a location where lead paint becomes deteriorated and poses a hazard, that property owner will know that they are dealing with a lead hazard and therefore need to address the hazard in a lead safe manner.

WIC

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program is a special supplemental nutrition program that promotes and maintain the health and well being of

nutritionally at risk pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants, and children. WIC provides health screening and pregnancy testing, nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support and immunizations; supplemental nutritious foods such as iron fortified infant formula, milk, eggs, juice, cheese, cereal, and peanut butter or beans; as well as referrals to health care providers and other community agencies. The City of Milwaukee Health Department's WIC program services an average of 8,000 clients a month.

Medical Assistance and Outreach

The Medical Assistance Outreach program helps Milwaukee residents sign up for BadgerCare and other Medicaid services, and makes referrals for clients to receive other important healthcare services. In 2009 thus far, the Health Department's small staff of three Healthcare Access Assistants has helped nearly 2,000 clients sign up for health insurance. The Health Department has recently been awarded two grants that will fund an additional five Healthcare Access Assistant positions.

Well Woman

The Well Woman program works to decrease the mortality rate of breast and cervical cancer in all women in the City of Milwaukee through education, outreach, screening, treatment, community awareness and involvement. The program provides preventive health screening services to low-income women who are uninsured or underinsured. Well Woman pays for mammograms, Pap tests, and multiple sclerosis testing. In 2009 thus far, Well Woman has provided over 1,000 cancer screenings to Milwaukee women.

School of Public Health

The proposed School of Public Health at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UW-M SPH) took one step closer to becoming reality with the recent passage of the 2009-11 State Budget by the Joint Finance Committee in Madison and official approval came when Governor Doyle signed the budget.

Funds have been allocated by the State of Wisconsin to support the construction of a new building, or remodeling of an existing structure to house the School of Public Health in downtown Milwaukee

I, along with Chief Medical Officer and Medical Director Geof Swain, have been a part of the UW-M SPH Planning Council since it convened in 2006.

In January 2009, Public Health Research and Policy Director Dr. Eric Gass became the liaison with UW-M SPH, serving on the overall steering committee, and the Public Health Administration and Policy PhD working group.

UWM and MHD have a co-location agreement. It is anticipated that by the Fall of 2011, between 40-60 MHD employees will have offices in the SPH building. Select MHD staff will have joint appointments with the UW-M SPH, with the type of appointment dependent upon a mix of appropriate education, experience, and tasks to be completed.

As an academic health department, the Health Department will teach and strengthen the public health workforce, provide research, and improve the health of a community.

To this end, unique relationships have been established to increase the number of graduate, and undergraduate, student interns working with MHD.

Health care administration undergrad students will be coming on board in the Spring of 2010, in addition to the large volume of nursing and medical students that already rotate through MHD.

Our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Swain, is also an Associate Professor with the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. In addition, our Associate Medical Director, Dr. Paul Hunter, is also a UW faculty member. Our close partnership with UW is further strengthened by that school's funding of Dr. Barbra Beck, who guides the work of UW Population Health Fellows placed at MHD.

These UW-paid post-masters-degree Fellows, along with a fellow from the CDC, several masters-in-public-health students from UW-Madison and UW-LaCrosse, and our research partners at the Center for Urban Population Health, provide an extension of our current workforce and assist us in research, evaluation and other program needs often not able to be addressed by our over-burdened workforce.

Since 2004, we've had seven Fellows working at the Health Department for two years each who have worked on several high profile projects within the

department, including our citywide health status assessment, our Center for Health Equity, our intensive nurse home visiting programs to improve birth outcomes, and our response to the H1N1 flu outbreak.

For the salaries of the fellows and Dr. Beck, the UW School of Medicine and Public Health has made a total investment of nearly a half million dollars in the Milwaukee Health Department - - that is nearly a half-million dollar contribution to our workforce that was outside of City tax levy dollars.

SECTION 3. Revenue Generation

I am pleased to report that the Health Department continues to identify ways to increase our efficiency within all our divisions. In addition, our adoption of an academic and business model approach to public health has strengthened our ability to generate revenue throughout the year.

Prenatal Care Coordination

The Health Department's Prenatal Care Coordination home visiting program is a new program designed to follow state guidelines for home visiting at-risk pregnant women. Following the state guidelines allows MHD to bill for every service offered. The PNCC program has generated more than \$22,000

of revenue for the city this year, and we are projecting \$50,000 in revenue for FY2010.

Lab

Another area we are making significant operational modification is through our laboratory services. The Health Department houses one of the oldest public health labs in the nation. Our staff regularly provides support, data for policy development and real-time response to outbreaks and public health emergencies, including the Falk disaster, bio-threats, mumps, pertussis, spinach contamination and more recently H1N1 influenza. In addition, the laboratory provides daily support for communicable diseases, STDs and lead poisoning to name but a few public health issues.

Our laboratory played a critical role in testing and surveillance for H1N1 influenza this spring. For example, since we could do the definitive confirmatory test as only two other places in the state, we became a major hub for testing until other labs were established. As a result, we generated over \$100,000 in revenue for flu tests and performed over 4,000 tests.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.