



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,
Erica Sinclair, Penelope Stewart, and Dr. Darlene Beck*

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

5:00 PM

City Hall, 200 E Wells St, Rm 301A

Please note room change from 303 to 301A.

1. Call to Order

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

2. Roll Call

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

Excused 1 - Beck

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 7, 2025

Board Member Penelope Stewart motioned to approve, Board Member Erica Sinclair seconded, and the motion passed with all in favor and none opposed.

Board Member Dr. Ian Martin asked for an immediate vote on the minutes in the future.

4. Community Updates

Board Member Erica Sinclair shared an upcoming Community Health & Resource Fair on August 9 with Outreach Community Health Centers.

Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly shared information about a new LGBT collective in Southeastern WI called The People's Center, a community group focused on uplifting organizations that work with LGBTQ community.

Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom shared that Covering Wisconsin will be hosting its Annual Health Insurance Enrollment Conference, a free, virtual event.

5. Communication from Health Commissioner Dr. Mike Totoraitis

(a) Federal Landscape

Commissioner Totoraitis provided an update on grant funding and lawsuits. Previously, MHD experienced a rescission of \$5 million from the HHS, including the Health Disparities grant and Epidemiology and Lab Capacity grant. A lawsuit proceeded about the loss of funds, and based on the dismissal of HHS's latest appeal, MHD is now confident enough to spend against those grants again.

Commissioner Totoraitis also reported that the City of Milwaukee and Dane County joined a lawsuit against HUD/HHS/DOT regarding the new unrelated terms and conditions placed on grant funding.

Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly asked about the timeline for the federal grants recently returned. Commissioner Totoraitis said Health Disparities was set to end early 2026 anyways. Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly asked if the project to install air quality equipment in shelters would be restarted; Commissioner Totoraitis confirmed it would be.

(b) Measles planning and preparedness

Commissioner Totoraitis reported on the 9 cases of measles reported in the state. No additional cases have been reported since, and those 9 cases are outside of their infectious period. There is a huge outbreak occurring north of Wisconsin in Canada.

MHD has conducted 2 tabletop exercises, one internally and one regionally, to simulate an outbreak scenario in order to better plan and prepare. Data analysis has been used to examine vaccination rates across schools in the city and to target support to schools via mobile outreach. MHD has procured additional doses of MMR to offer the vaccine for free.

Board Member Dr. Ian Martin asked about factors influencing the measles outbreak in Canada. Commissioner Totoraitis spoke to factors like Plain Communities, education, younger population demographics in Canada, etc. There has been only one death in Canada to date.

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang asked two questions on behalf of the community, including (1) recent air quality. Commissioner Totoraitis spoke to wildfires in Canada as well as burgeoning research suggesting seasonal poor air quality. There is a lack of strong winds to clear it right now. Poor air quality causes health issues for people with asthma, especially kids. DNR recommends minimizing time outside if possible.

(2) Immunization requirements for students attending MPS. Commissioner Totoraitis said more exemptions have filed over time and that vaccine compliance actually includes exemptions, so students can be "in compliance" if they have a waiver. Students who do not have the MMR vaccine are excluded from school for 21 days after measles exposure. After exposure, there is a 72-hour window to get vaccinated to ideally prevent getting measles.

Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom asked if there was a way for people to test if they still had immunity for measles. Commissioner Totoraitis said most healthy people don't need a titer to tell if they still have measles immunity from vaccination because measles does not evolve. Commissioner Totoraitis encouraged everyone to check and upload their records to ensure information is up to date

in WI Immunization Registry.

Board Member Penelope Stewart asked for a Q&A on measles to be released for the community. Commissioner Totoraitis will get back to Board with any FAQ info on measles that exists.

Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly asked about the Back to School Health Fair. Commissioner Totoraitis shared that MHD will be doing a campaign as opposed to a single event this year. It will be held closer to the exclusion deadline to account for increased demand at that time. Hosting the events at multiple locations will help with transportation challenges that families face.

6. MPS Lead Update by Deputy Commissioner of Environmental Health Tyler Weber

(a) Lead screening

Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom asked if the mobile clinics will include lead testing. Commissioner Totoraitis spoke to a new CDC request for more funding and MPS working with a third party for testing. Deputy Commissioner Tyler Weber said lead screening requires a different skillset and environment than immunizations, so it makes it more challenging to pair the events. MHD is investigating how to concurrently do lead screening with vaccine clinics in the fall.

MHD is working with the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership to collaborate with hospital systems to better improve screening rates in primary care settings. MPS continues working with a third party to host screenings. Deputy Commissioner Weber said ~600 kids have been screened (compared to ~60,000 MPS students, for context).

(b) Data

Deputy Commissioner Weber said a MOU was in process with MPS for a data agreement to acquire information without going through the parental consent process every time. This helps to cross reference with MHD's lead database.

(c) Building Remediation

Deputy Commissioner Tyler Weber reported 9 schools have been cleared. 14 schools are being worked on currently. Another 18 schools are being stabilized. Most will be ready for the start of the school year. Another 9 will need classroom closure, possibly. Waste from this work is monitored by DNR and has to be tested first, so lab results delay the disposal.

MHD is still working on adjusting to the scale of MPS given both MHD's experience and regulation/statute is geared towards residential cases. MHD had loaned Michael Mannan to MPS; he has returned to MHD and is still working with MPS 1 day per week.

Board Member Penelope Stewart asked about how long clearance lasts. Deputy Commissioner Weber confirmed clearance is temporary, so it's important to build a culture of looking out for lead hazards, cleaning, regular maintenance, and utilizing summer breaks for important updates. Deputy Commissioner Tyler Weber responded that there's set timelines for how long remediation work is expected to last. However, those timelines are always subject to wear and tear and renovations. Zero lead is not possible given current homes and schools. Only new buildings could accomplish that.

7. Improving Branch Collaborations

Tabled due to time.

8. Branch Collaboration Updates

Tabled due to time.

9. Discussion of Upcoming Elections

Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang reminded everyone elections will be held during the September meeting. Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang thanked everyone for their support in his first year as chair. Board Member Caroline Gomez-Tom and Dr. Ian Martin thanked Chair Zhang for his service.

10. Future Agenda Items

- Opioid Settlement Fund Uses
- Clinical Branch Presentation
- Built Environment MKE Elevate
- Recognizing Ruthie during her last meeting
- PIO Caroline Reinwald to discuss process of releasing Board's communications
- Writing new board letters (in response to lawsuit update) to continue communication with the community – Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly volunteered.

Ericka (1) thanked Chair Dr. Wujie Zhang for his leadership, (2) Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly for her service and dedication, and (3) asked. for more community voice at these meeting. Board Member Dr. Ian Martin reiterated Ericka's point about bringing the community in, proposing that the board members bring a community member to each meeting. Board Member Ruthie Burich-Weatherly mentioned the idea of an annual public forum.

11. Adjournment

Board Member Dr. Ian Martin motioned to adjourn, Board Member Ericka Sinclair seconded the motion, and it passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 pm.

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Communication relating to the documents submitted to the Board of Health for its meetings in 2025.