

Michael S. D'Amato
Alderman, 3rd District

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February 13, 2003

Dr. Seth Foldy
Commissioner of Health
City of Milwaukee Health Department
Zeidler Municipal Building, Room 315
841 North Broadway
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653

Dear Dr. Foldy:

In light of the Common Council's inaction yesterday (February 11, 2003) in the matter of the Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) entering into a service agreement with Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc. (PPWI) for clients referred by the MHD at the Northwest Health Center (NWHC), I am strongly urging that you move forward at this time and enter into such an agreement with PPWI. The justification for pursuing such an executive action, I believe, is best illustrated by the following facts:

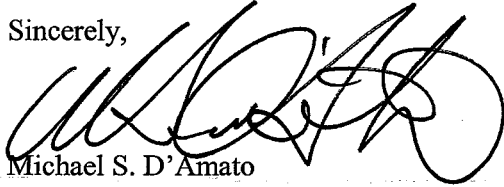
- Milwaukee has an exceptionally high teen pregnancy rate, second only to Baltimore among the nation's largest cities.
- More than 20% of all babies born in Milwaukee were born to teen mothers.
- Milwaukee has the 10th highest rate of gonorrhea in the nation, the second highest chlamydia rate and the 22nd highest rate of syphilis.
- In the 53218 ZIP code – the area where the NWHC is located – there is a high rate of chlamydia and gonorrhea cases.
- African American women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with and three times more likely to die from cervical cancer due to HPV infections.
- African American women account for 62% of all new AIDS cases among women in the U.S.
- Half of PPWI's patient base is at or below the poverty level and many don't have access to a primary care provider.
- The maternal mortality rate among African American women is four times the rate for white women.
- The Allen Guttmacher Institute estimates that family planning programs in Wisconsin prevent 35,000 unintended pregnancies and 17,000 abortions in Wisconsin each year.



Each day we go without services such as those that could be provided by PPWI we are putting at risk dozens of young Milwaukeeans who will get pregnant, who will be infected by STDs, who will get cancer and who will drop out of school. These are risks and costs that we simply cannot afford to allow our citizens – many of them poor and undereducated – to bear. It is hard to imagine that any member of the Common Council would be opposed to a partnership that would address these horrible problems and do so at no cost to Milwaukee taxpayers.

I urge you to act on the service agreement with PPWI in an expedient manner so that we can get these services in place at NWHC as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael S. D'Amato". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Michael S. D'Amato
Alderman, 3rd District