



April 24, 2026

Subject: Regarding resolution authorizing the expenditure of opioid settlement funds

Dear Members of the Milwaukee Common Council Public Safety & Health Committee,

As Members of the City of Milwaukee Board of Health, we write with urgency and strong support for the immediate approval of the 3-Year Opioid Settlement Fund Strategic Plan developed through the leadership of Milwaukee Fire Chief Aaron Lipski and Commissioner Mike Totoraitis.

The opioid crisis continues to claim lives, destabilize families, strain first responders, burden hospitals, and damage neighborhoods across Milwaukee. Delay in deploying these funds is not a neutral act—it has consequences. Every month lost is another month where prevention efforts are underfunded, treatment gaps remain open, and residents are left without the support they urgently need.

The Board of Health had the opportunity to review this plan in detail. It is thoughtful, evidence-driven, and rooted in nationally recognized best practices, including the Johns Hopkins guiding principles and a Continuum of Care framework. It appropriately addresses the full spectrum of need: prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and long-term stabilization. This is exactly how responsible government should approach a crisis of this scale.

We are especially encouraged by the commitment of more than \$5 million for community-based investment. Milwaukee's grassroots organizations, neighborhood leaders, recovery advocates, and frontline providers are often closest to those most impacted. They must be empowered as partners in this response. This plan recognizes that reality and creates a pathway for resources to reach those doing the work every day.

It is deeply disappointing that authorization has been postponed. Milwaukee residents deserve action, not unnecessary delay. The settlement funds were secured to repair harm and save lives—not to sit idle while the crisis continues.

We strongly urge the Committee and the full Common Council to move this plan forward without further obstruction. Approve the strategy. Release the funding. Allow implementation to begin immediately. Milwaukee cannot afford hesitation on an issue measured in lives lost and communities harmed.

The City has before it a credible plan, proven leadership, and a moral obligation to act. We expect each of you to meet that responsibility in the leadership roles entrusted to you by the Milwaukee residents you were elected to represent.

Sincerely

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