



June 10, 2026

Milwaukee Common Council
City Hall
200 E Wells St
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Members of the Milwaukee Common Council:

On behalf of Children's Wisconsin (Children's), I'm writing to express our strong support for the Safe Summer Sites Initiative.

Firearm-related injuries are the leading cause of death for children and teens in Wisconsin. Last year alone, Children's Wisconsin cared for 93 children injured by guns and 7 children who died of gunshot wounds, all told representing 100 kids and their families, friends, neighbors and communities forever changed. When a child is injured by a firearm, care providers across specialties at Children's come together to care for that child and their family, with life-saving care, surgeries, therapies, resources and support for their continued healing.

Children's also has a long-standing commitment to preventing violence, especially firearm violence, affecting kids and teens, working with partners across the local, state and national landscapes. Over the last decade, community members across Milwaukee have identified safety and violence as a top health issue to address. Over the last year, we have been convening with community leaders to discuss gun violence and identify ways to scale up and better coordinate existing efforts. At our most recent convening, we heard from more than two dozen Milwaukee Public Schools high school students about their perspectives and ideas on what they need to be supported and stay safe.

The Safe Summer Sites Initiative reflects desires shared by youth and community partners for safe spaces with evening and weekend hours for youth to gather safely, build relationships with caring adults, access positive activities and receive support. By supporting trusted neighborhood locations that promote safety, youth development, positive connections, and more, young people are more likely to thrive.

We recognize that gun violence is a complex issue that requires multiple solutions and a comprehensive approach – including wraparound care, mental health supports, education, youth engagement, research and more. We each have a role to play in stepping up to support our youth and help keep our communities safe. Children's is proud to invest in the Safe Summer Sites Initiative as a positive, community- and youth-centered strategy to support violence prevention and empower youth. This investment represents an advancement in public safety, youth development, and economic opportunity.

I encourage the Milwaukee Common Council's investment to implement the Safe Summer Sites Initiative to join Children's and other community partners in supporting our youth. I appreciate your consideration and commitment to supporting our kids.

Sincerely,

Gil Peri
President & CEO
Children's Wisconsin

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Kids deserve the **best.**