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To the Members of the Public Safety Committee

Remarks by Commissioner of Health Re-appointee
Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Before the Public Safety Committee

City of Milwaukee

May 29, 2008

Thank you very much.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am honored to appear before you today to testify about my qualifications, accomplishments and plans for the future of the City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD). I would also like to thank Mayor Barrett for the confidence he has expressed by nominating me for reappointment as Commissioner of Health.

Mr. Chairman, I do have a prepared statement. I would like to abbreviate it, however, if I may place the prepared statement in the record.

It has been my privilege to serve the City of Milwaukee for over seven years. I joined the City as Health Operations Director in 2001, coming from a community health system in Miami, Florida. I remain truly humbled by the hard work and dedication of my Health Department colleagues who preceded me, and those currently working with me to make this reappointment possible.

I am most thankful to my wife, daughter and son for their unconditional love and support as I balance the demands of public service with my commitment to family life.

I am proud of my public service with the City of Milwaukee Health Department, whether it is responding to major disease outbreaks, addressing childhood vaccination rates or helping the economically disadvantaged access health services. I welcome the opportunity to continue to serve the public by completing the work I have undertaken at the Health Department.

When I last testified before this committee four years ago, I set forth a vision for the Health Department that included reducing racial and ethnic health disparities, enhancing collaborative partnerships with hospital health systems and academic institutions, reducing infant mortality rates, teen pregnancy prevention and curbing the rates of

sexually transmitted disease. I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress on many of these objectives and we are well on our way toward further achievements. For example, during the last four years:

Improved Awareness of Public Health

- Revamped our logo and tagline to “Think Health Act Now.”
- We did this to show the City of Milwaukee Health Department as an action-oriented organization and to reinforce the notion that health and wellness begins with thought to change behavior followed by action to implement.
- MHD has successfully responded to local and national media to educate the public and allay fears through appropriate risk communications.
- There are over 13 model best practices that MHD has presented at prestigious national conferences.

Infant Mortality

- Infant mortality reduction has been one of MHD’s top health priorities.
- While we will not be able to change the rate overnight, I am pleased that during my tenure we have worked with state officials and local health systems to secure approximately \$7M in grant funding for two nationally recognized home visiting programs, Empowering Families of Milwaukee and the Nurse Family Partnership.
- These programs are showing positive results and are serving close to 400 women. The goal is to reduce prematurity, which is the leading cause of infant mortality and improve birth outcomes.

Immunization

- One key outcome where there has been, and we will continue to see, a marked improvement is in the area of immunization.

- We have increased the immunization compliance rates within MPS students from 64% to 83% during the last four years.

Emergency and Disease Response

- The MHD reaffirmed its commitment to national and local relief efforts by serving as an immediate responder to both Hurricane Katrina and the local Falk Explosion.
- The MHD mobilized quickly in response to a major power outage during the opening day of the world's largest outdoor music festivals to ensure that food temperature and safety was not compromised for vendors or festival attendees.
- The successful management of e.coli in spinach, whooping cough, and most recently the measles outbreak garnered national media attention.

Teen Pregnancy

- With the second highest teen pregnancy rate in the U.S., Mayor Barrett and I have taken a very prominent and active role with the United Way of Greater Milwaukee to increase awareness by the community of this problem.
- But, most recently we have shared a specific goal to decrease teen pregnancy by 46% by 2015. This was a bold move, but one that needed to be announced and we will work with the entire Milwaukee community to meet.

Healthcare Access

- The MHD enrolls more families in Badgercare than any other site in Wisconsin. From 2004-2007 we have enrolled 6500 families to Badgercare. To date in 2008 we have enrolled nearly 800 families.
- In addition, for the last four years the MHD has administered the largest one-day back to school health fair in the city. We have reached over 10,000 residents.

Violence

- We will continue to work on violence as a public health concern and I am pleased that the Office of Violence Prevention will be working to increase community partnership and programming for the reduction of violence in our city.

Sexually Transmitted Disease Reduction (STD)

- The reduction of STD's in our community will continue to be a major area of focus.
- I am pleased to share that we have strong management in place and have recruited staff with national expertise from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to assist in the development and execution of strategies and tactics to improve these rates.

Food Safety Inspection

- The emergence of national food safety will continue to have an increased prominent role in public health.
- We are currently exploring and examining a food rating system for retail establishments in the city and have connected with industry officials as we begin developing the blueprint for this plan.

School of Public Health

- Mayor Barrett and I will continue to work towards the establishment of a School of Public Health in the City of Milwaukee.
- With the recent \$10M Joseph Zilber gift we will work to leverage philanthropic relationships to reach the necessary funding levels.
- We have dedicated one full-time employee toward improving linkages with the School of Public Health planning and also work in the areas of health policy and research. These activities are part of a strategic plan to move the MHD toward one of the nation's premier academic public health department.

Milwaukee Center for Health Equity

- When I sat in this chair four years ago, one of my main areas of focus was the improving health disparity rates in the city while strengthening health system relationships.
- I am very pleased to inform you that we have indeed met this goal. Through the generous grant support by Columbia St. Mary's we have created the Milwaukee Center for Health Equity.
- This Center will address upstream determinants of health (e.g. income, education, racism, unemployment, literacy and food security) in order to achieve health and reduce inequities.
- Some activities will include policy level intervention and working with the faith-based community.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify and be considered for reappointment. I would be happy to answer any questions.

CONFIDENTIAL RESUME

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EDUCATION

1988 MHA - Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
1985 BS - Medical Technology, Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem, NC

EXPERIENCE

2004 **City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI**
To
Present Commissioner of Health

Responsibilities: Responsible for public health assessment, policy development, and assurance activities associated with the preservation of the public health in the City of Milwaukee. Manage multi-million operating budget, capital budget and 300 FTE's. Serve as chief health advisor to the Mayor.

2001-2004 **City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI**

Chief Operating Officer/Health Operations Director

Responsibilities: Served as principal staff advisor to the Commissioner of Health. Provided oversight of administrative functions including finance, personnel management, information technology, facility management and communications.

Accomplishments:

- Developed and implemented department corporate compliance unit.
- Developed and implemented performance management system for supervisory staff.
- Developed and implemented Alternative Workforce Scheduling System to support staff recruitment and retention which increased nursing staffing recruitment by 35%.
- Implemented an outsourcing strategy for Occupational Health Unit resulting in \$600K annual savings.
- Developed and piloted an Internet based 360-degree feedback system to support employee development.
- Piloted and implemented mobile wireless PC tablet technology for nursing staff home visits. Reduced data entry turnaround time by 24 hours.

1999-2000 **Economic Opportunity Family Health Center/Health Choice Network, Inc., Miami, FL**
(The Health Choice Network, Inc. is a not-for-profit health system with 88 primary care sites)

Chief Operating Officer

Responsibilities: Manage all aspects of center operations and implement and monitor corporate budget. Departments included Nursing, Pharmacy, Radiology, Lab, Human Resources, Practice Management, Managed Care and Marketing.

Accomplishments:

- Coordinated and oversight of EOFHC's initial JCAHO survey. Resulted in a three-year accreditation and a nomination for the Ernest A. Codman Award, which recognizes excellence in the use of performance measures to achieve health care quality improvement.
- Author and Co-Principal Investigator of a three-year \$3.6-million demonstration project funded by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide technical assistance and consultation services to health organizations that provide medical services to underserved communities.
- Planned, coordinated and managed \$2.7 million capital improvement of EOFHC's flagship center.
- Planned and coordinated the opening of two new ambulatory care centers.
- Identified and implemented a \$1.4 million communication system that integrates marketing and centralized patient appointment scheduling.

1990-1999 **Urban Resource Institute, New York, NY**
(The Urban Resource Institute is a private not-for-profit organization with 12 freestanding outpatient ambulatory care facilities providing 495,000 visits annually).

Director of Administration

Responsibilities: Managed 12 ambulatory care facilities, which included 500 FTEs. Other responsibilities include strategic and financial planning, information technology, site acquisitions, marketing and new business development.

Accomplishments:

- Implemented a sophisticated computer-based communication, monitoring information processing system to support an integrated network across 12 facilities resulting in \$7.1 million reduction in operational expenses. This included a state of the art electronic outpatient medical record.
- Author and Principal Investigator of National Institutes of Health contract to research Medicaid Managed Care. Pilot data collected during contract resulted in development of a computer-based system for medication tracking, insurance verification and authorization.
- Author and Project Administrator of HHS facility construction grant which resulted in \$3 million clinical research center.
- Established corporate Administrative Residency Program in Health Services Administration.
- Re-engineered clinical departments resulting in a reduction of 150 FTEs and \$5 million savings in labor costs.

1988-1990 Earlier experience in Medical Technology and as an Administrative Resident and Marketing Analyst with healthcare delivery organizations in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

1987-1988 **University of Pittsburgh Medical Center**, Pittsburgh, PA
(A 636 bed academic medical center)

Administrative Resident

Participated as administrative staff. Conducted audit of funded depreciation for hospital feasibility study resulting in interest expense savings on \$75 million.

CERTIFICATIONS

Fellow, American College of Healthcare Executives
Registered Medical Technologist, American Society of Clinical Pathologists

AWARDS

2002 Wisconsin American College of Healthcare Executives' Young Healthcare Executive of Year Award
1997 Alumni Achiever Award, Winston-Salem State University

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Medical Society of Milwaukee County, Board of Directors	2005 to Present
National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin, Board of Directors	2003 to Present
Partnerships for Healthy Milwaukee, Chair	2001 to Present
The Center for Urban Population Health, Milwaukee, Board Member	2001 to Present

APPOINTMENTS

Governor of Wisconsin, eHealth Care Quality and Patient Safety Board, Member	2005 to Present
Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke, Milw.Co. Emergency Public Health Director	2005 to Present
Governor of Wisconsin, Public Health Council, Member	2004 to Present
Assistant Clinical Professor, Dept. of Health Administration, UW-Milwaukee	2001 to Present

ORAL TESTIMONY

Oral Testimony Before the House of Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education and Related Agencies U.S. House of Representatives March 28, 2002 e-Health Initiative Congressional Briefing Technically Speaking: The Path to Improved Electronic Public Health Surveillance.

PERSONAL

Married with two children

OUTSIDE INTERESTS

Alpine skiing, marathoner and vinyl records collector

REFERENCES

Furnished upon request.