



**For Immediate Release:**

October 13, 2020

**Media Contact:**

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**Milwaukee Crisis Response and Care System:  
A Letter from the Community**

*We need public health that includes harm-reduction based programs that will respond to residents with unmet mental health needs that doesn't involve police.*

Dear Mayor Barrett, Alderperson, and other City Department Leadership,

**We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, write on behalf of our communities in support of Milwaukee's non-law enforcement emergency response network.** We demand that Milwaukee develop and fully implement a harm-reduction based program housed in the Milwaukee Health Department that will respond to people with unmet mental health needs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, **without the involvement of law enforcement**, that will be staffed by 100 health professionals and peer advocates paid a minimum of \$18/hour plus benefits.

- This recommendation is based on the CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) program in Eugene, Oregon. CAHOOTS is a mobile crisis intervention team that responds to "non-criminal crises, including homelessness, intoxication, disorientation, substance abuse and mental illness problems, and dispute resolution." The annual operating budget for the CAHOOTS program **supporting 40 staff members, who are available 24/7 in some areas, is \$1.5 million dollars. Staff members earn \$18/hr, plus benefits**, which is significantly less than the cost of hiring additional police officers.

Budget Director Yaccirino said, "Police officers spend an average of 1 hour and 43 minutes per mental health observation call. There were 8,141 calls in 2019 meaning officers used 13,975 hours at these calls or the equivalent of at least 7 police officers."

Building this program would be a better investment for the city of Milwaukee and save the city money. Now is the time to be better stewards of our taxpayer dollars. Be bold with your amendments and help put an end to violence that causes injury, abuse, damage and the destruction in our communities.

***As individuals, organizations, and community members committed to investing in proven strategies to increase the health and wellbeing of our entire community, we strongly support the adoption of this as a budget amendment.***

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert S. Smith, chair MCHRC  
Chineva  
MalamaDoe-A Coworking Community for Women  
Milika Miller  
Cass Bowers, DEI Consultant  
Caressa Givens  
Black Leaders Organizing for Community (BLOC)  
Elizabeth A. Parisi  
Black Socialist Caucus of Milwaukee  
Joyce Ellwanger  
Wisconsin Voices  
Laura Hermanns  
Kevin R. Driscoll  
Jacklynn Fitzgerald  
Sebastian Daniel  
Browns Crew (El Sebas & Cristo Paz)  
Annie Drake  
Nora Rasman  
Progressive Moms of Wisconsin  
ubuntu research and evaluation  
Daniel O'Keefe  
Martha Collins  
Kenwaun Flynn  
Paul Post  
Christine Larson  
Greta Minor  
Ashley Stinson  
Kristin Lee  
Chris Dwyer  
Anita Johnson  
Lauren Grocott  
Julie Emery  
Haley Kolp  
Dr. Jodi Melamed  
PLAIN ENGLISH  
Amy Taylor  
Liz Fox  
Elizabeth Lippert  
Gentle Hands Home Healthcare  
Kyrie Sellnow  
Layton Boulevard West Neighbors, Inc.  
News414  
Metcalfe Park Community Bridges, Inc  
Melody McCurtis

Slab 7 Music Group  
Oregon Area Progressives  
Manna Behavioral Services  
Milwaukee Zen Center  
John Bartel  
WAVE Educational Fund  
Andrew Schramm  
Jobs That Help  
Sadie Larsen  
Milwaukee Democratic Socialists of America  
Rose Stietz  
Ben Turk  
Melanie Hupfer  
Hmong American Women's Association Inc.  
Becky Cofta  
NEW LIFE ASSEMBLY OF GOD  
Ryeshia Farmer  
Sharlen Moore  
Voces de la Frontera  
Waukesha Activists  
Jump at the Sun Consultants, LLC  
Elaine Lathen  
Lorraine Halinka Malcoe, PhD, MPH  
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Rachael Habermehl  
Doug Singen  
Tom Hansberger  
Jack Ditthardt  
Austin Bunch  
9to5 Wisconsin  
Pastor Matt Erickson  
Benjamin J. Rangel  
Geneva Jones  
Dr. Krista Lisdahl  
Shirley Funches Tucker  
Dr. Lakeia Jones, CEO of AMRI Counseling Services  
patrick nickelson, Milwaukee DSA Abolition Working Group  
Warren Enstrom