



Ascension



Advocate Aurora Health



Kids deserve the best.



July 13, 2020

The Honorable Tom Barrett
Mayor of Milwaukee
200 E Wells St # 201
Milwaukee, WI 53202

[Sent electronically]

Dear Mayor Barrett,

Milwaukee has been the hardest hit community by COVID-19 in the State of Wisconsin. Since the beginning of the pandemic, residents have struggled to meet their most basic needs around protecting themselves and their families because our community as a whole has a lack of access to basic supplies, such as household cleaners, disinfectants, and hand sanitizer. We applaud and appreciate the anticipated distribution of masks by the Health Department. At the same time, we know that more supplies are needed to keep our community safe. We hope you will consider future efforts to improve access to household and other supplies that will keep communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID 19 safe.

As you consider the proposed MKE Cares ordinance, we also ask that you continue to raise awareness about the potential for a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable members of our community. As part of the implementation and enforcement of a final ordinance, we also urge the City to support a broad definition of "face covering" to allow for a range of cloth and non-medical masks (ranging from homemade, to cloth masks to non-medical masks). In addition, please continue to focus on increased education for proper mask use.

We fully support existing and additional efforts at both the state and local levels to advance unified messaging around the need to practice good public health, including wearing masks, washing hands and maintaining distance from others. We recognize, as you do, the importance of helping our residents obtain the masks and supplies they need to stay safer. We have seen increased stigma associated with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis because of the messaging around individual responsibility in mitigating the spread of the virus. We must work collectively to ensure that a resident's inability to pay for or obtain necessary supplies does not create additional risk for them and their families.

Thank you for your longstanding efforts and partnership in advancing the health of all members of the Milwaukee community. We look forward to continuing to collaborate and work together to care for our community.

Sincerely,

Advocate Aurora Health
Ascension Wisconsin
Children's Wisconsin
Froedtert Health
Medical College of Wisconsin

Cc: Alderwoman Marina Dimitrijevic